BEATRICE.

BEATRICE,

OR THE

INCONSTANT,

A TRAGIC NOVEL.

By ſuch examples are we taught to prove,
The ſorrows that attend unlawful love;
Death, or ſome worſe misfortune ſoon divide,
The injur'd bridegroom from his guilty bride.

ROWE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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BEATRICE.

LETTER XLII.

SIR EDWARD MEADOWS,

TO

MR. PEMBERTON.

The Cottage.

I AM at length relieved from a ſuſpence the moſt cruel that I have ever yet experienced; ah! how more than relieved; bear with me my dear *Pemberton*—can I be inſenſible to a diſcovery ſo dear to me? She loves me—yes, I am ſure ſhe does, I cannot be deceived,—ſhe avoided me while ſhe thought me the lover of *Miſs Sedley*, and thinks me ſuch no longer,—and flies me no more; all that cold reſerve, that diſtant civility, which ſo

wounded my ſoul is at an end. She receives me with ſmiles, ſhe diſmiſſes me with a ſigh;—her voice is the voice of friendſhip, her looks are thoſe of ſoftneſs and compla[illegible], I found the ſo long deſired opportunity of entertaining her apart, whilſt the card table engroſſed the attention of the company. Before I could enter on the ſubject neareſt my heart, ſhe began to rally me on the gravity of my countenance; "Another lover," ſhe ſaid, "would have appeared more than uſually gay, on the diſmiſſion of a rival." You will believe I looked ~~with~~ aſtoniſhment; what could ſhe mean, I aſked, by the terms *lover* and *rival*,—and ſoon underſtood from her, that ſhe had heard the involuntary exclamation which eſcaped me on ſeeing *Amyand* (the favoured *Amyand*, I then thought him) in converſation with *Miſs Sedley*; for the avowal of a paſſion for that lady. Freſh viſitors being at this inſtant announced, prevented any farther explanation ~~on~~ (though indeed I ſhould not have dared to hazard it at this time) on my ſide;

then

then asking if it were poſſible that ſhe could have ſo miſtaken me; but though I could no longer ſpeak on the ſubject, my eyes were at liberty. O *Pemberton*, I could not miſapprehend the intelligence of that ſweetly expreſſive face; the crimſon glow was not the glow of anger, of diſdain! the look ſhe caſt on me, as ſhe roſe to receive the party juſt entering, was not the look of offended friendſhip.

I was obliged to attend my *mother* and *Louiſa* early on the next morning to *Willbury*, where we were to remain ſome days; I will own it *Pemberton*, I could not endure to remain ſo long ſilent, without more explicitly aſſuring her that *Miſs Sedley* was perfectly indifferent to me; and explaining (as far as I dared) the motives of that expreſſed envy which had miſled her. You will call me preſumptuous, perhaps you will ſay that vanity alone led me to believe that I ſhould not offend the firſt of women. No, *Pemberton*! I was not born probably with a leſs ſhare of this

vice, than many others; but from the moment that bleſſed me with the ſight of the *Counteſs of Aubigny*, admiration, eſteem, and a love not more animated than ~~have been the~~ refined, entire poſſeſſors of my ~~love~~. Nor vanity, nor ambition, nor any leſs elevated ſentiment than that of the pureſt affection, occupies in it the ſmalleſt ſhare; its every paſſion is abſorbed in that which I feel, which I muſt for ever feel, for this lovelieſt of women.

The tedious week at length elapſed; we returned; —I ſent a ſecond billet, entreating permiſſion to make perſonal enquiries after her health,—my requeſt was granted; I flew to *the Lodge*, and had the felicity to find her alone—this meeting convinced me, that her tendereſt friendſhip at leaſt is all my own; 'tis true we ſpoke no longer on the ſubject of *Sedley*, we talked but on general ſubjects; yet our eyes ſpoke a language unequivocal. O *Pemberton* it was the language of love. The bluſh of the morning

morning equals not the vermillion of her cheeks when I entered her dreſſing room; the enchantment of her ſmile, the ſoftneſs of her voice, and the corrected delight which her confuſion and embarraſment could not conceal, are rivetted for ever in my memory. *Amyand* has left the *Lodge*, and taken his laſt farewell of *Lavinia*; ſince his departure, I think *Lady Campbell* has behaved more than uſually ſerious, ſhe certainly wiſhed his addreſſes ſhould have met a different ſucceſs; *Lavinia* herſelf ſeems unhappy, and frequently buried in thought; probably from the fear that ſhe has given pain to her *Ladyſhip*; for it cannot be ſuppoſed that the abſence of a man whoſe affection diſtreſſed, and whoſe importunities wearied her, can cauſe her any chagrin; pity indeed, for a man ſo tenderly attached to her, might create ſome little diſquietude to a heart, which, I am ſure, poſſeſſes the moſt generous ſentiments and unaffected ſenſibility, but could not make her ſo very unhappy as ſhe ap-

pears to be. I was alone with her the other day near half an hour, the converſation turned on the marriage of a young lady in the neighbourhood, who has been the ſacrifice of her parents ambition, and married to a man to whom ſhe has in vain pleaded an averſion. *Lavinia* ſpoke ſo ſenſibly, and ſo pathetically on the ſubject, that I could not help expreſſing my ſurprize, that with ſo much tenderneſs of heart, with ſo juſt a ſenſe of the miſery which muſt reſult from a marriage founded on principles of avarice and pride, and conſequently the felicity which might be expected from an union ~~founded~~ formed on the baſis of mutual eſteem and affection; ſhe ſhould be ſo inſenſible to a paſſion of which ſhe entertained ſuch juſt ideas; and from her ſentiments ~~of~~ which I found *Mr. Amyand* ſtill more deſerving of pity, in not being able to make any impreſſion on her heart. *Lady Campbell* entering the room put a ſtop to the converſation, and ſoon after I took my leave.

Send

Send me a line *Pemberton*, I entreat that you will; juſt to ſignify that you have not entirely renounced me, but attempt no more to argue me out of a paſſion which can never be eraſed from my breaſt,

" *Till life, the prop of all, ſhall quit its dwelling*"
And moulder into ruins.

I am ever, my beſt loved friend, your faithful

EDWARD MEADOWS.

LETTER XLIII.

LADY SEYMOUR,

TO

LADY AUBIGNY.

Morton-Hall.

NO! it is not poſſible that the two laſt letters ſigned with her name, can have been written by *Lady Aubigny!*—I will not believe it.—It is a cruel forgery, meant to interrupt the harmony of our friendſhip, by repreſenting my amiable *Beatrice*, in a light which would render all communication of cloſely connected friendſhip, a reflection on my own principles; an unjuſtifiable neglect of the purity of that character which every *married* woman owes to her huſband, yet more ſtrongly if it be poſſible, than every *ſingle* one to herſelf and to her connexions, to preſerve unblemiſhed and unſuſpected. I have letters then; I muſt repeat, cannot

not be otherwise than malicious forgeries; my friend had *virtue*, had *honour*, had *delicacy*, had *generosity*, that would have gratefully *promoted*, not barbarously wished to *destroy* the happiness of a heart that cherished for her a fond and sisterly affection: to the person represented by these letters, I am a stranger, nor recognize a single feature of her, who has been so long in possession of my esteem and love.—Ah! my dear *Lady Aubigny*, let me beseech you will exert yourself to discover this unfair imposture; suffer not one so unlike the friend my heart had chosen, to be imposed on me for my own; restore to me my lost *Beatrice*; alas! at this time how ill can I afford to be deprived of her; my dear *Mrs. Morton's* life so doubtful, so precarious, must I at once lose *two* friends so dear to me; begin the search, my dear friend, and fill the vacancy made by *Lady Aubigny*, I trust but for a time in my heart; for never could I submit to receive in her place a character so unlike her own.—My prayers shall not be want-

ing, that you may ſucceed in her recovery: Your [redacted] this mortifying, this afflicting moment, greatly ſorrowing,

HENRIETTA.

LETTER XLIV.

LADY AUBIGNY,

TO

LADY SEYMOUR

The Lodge.

YES! I acknowledge it, I merit all your reproaches—keen and ſevere as they are, I will own I have deſerved them; I am indeed the vile, the ungenerous, the wretched apoſtate from virtue, and from honour, from every better principle, that you have painted me, and you are perhaps, but too well juſtified in caſting me from your heart for ever, as a guilty creature, whom it would be infamy to think of with

with tenderneſs or compaſſion.—Gracious God! did I ever think that my *Henrietta*, the kind, the affectionate, the indulgent *Henrietta*, would [redacted] have thus expreſſed herſelf, towards the long loved ſiſter of her heart. Alas! I was before but too wretched—now the meaſure is complete; and it is the friend I moſt love, that in deſpight of her unkindneſs, I muſt forever love, that adds a weight to pain to the reflections which would of themſelves have preyed more forcibly than *friendſhip* ſurely could have wiſhed, on the feelings of my heart.—Yes! let me own, for I deſerve the humiliation of appearing to you the wretch I am,—let me own that I had believed him ſufficiently prepoſſeſſed in favour of another, to be inſenſible to the charms of *Lavinia*; and that I feel it exquiſitely painful to reflect that I was deceived. Forgive me, dear ingenuous *Sedley*, I know your affection for me, I owe you the tendereſt return; I profeſs myſelf your friend, and yet regret that the man whoſe eſteem is neceſſary to your

happineſs, has a heart ſenſible to your worth, and which confeſſes the power of your charms. Ah! how unworthy am I of your friendſhip! yet worthleſs as I am, make me not, my *Henrietta, indeed* an alien to your heart.—But you cannot if you would, root me thence, I know it by my own.

Deeply have you wounded my ſoul, its pride, its ſelf-love, its every feeling have been tortured by the cruel refinement of your reproaches; yet never for a moment have I ceaſed to love you, or to bleſs the hand that has pierced my very heart.—Ah! no, my friend, the *Beatrice* you have loſt, *never* can be reſtored to you; and *Lady Seymour* you will ſay receives not *her*, who ſighs for the affection of a man, whoſe paſſion had ſhe inſpired it, ought to fill her with horror.—Alas! I ſee my guilt, I feel my miſery, (is not the latter the inſeparable companion of the former?) and am unable to reſiſt either one or the other.

BEATRICE AUBIGNY.

LETTER XLV.

LADY AUBIGNY,

TO

LADY SEYMOUR.

The Lodge.

I Have been miſtaken, *Henrietta*—*Sedley* is *not* the object of his tenderneſs, he has avowed that ſhe is not. I expect your freſh reproofs, I already hear the repetition of your reproaches; my own are but too cruel for my peace; how then, ſhall I again bear the additional weight of your's. Never more however will I attempt to diſguiſe from you the ſituation of that heart which you have ſo vainly endeavoured to preſerve from the faſcination of too powerful an oppoſer. We had company yeſterday evening—I had juſt reſigned my ſeat at the card table to *Lavinia*, when *Sir Edward* entered. His countenance beſpoke ~~his~~ dejection and uneaſineſs, he ſeated

ſeated himſelf by me.—I felt an aukward embarraſſment at finding myſelf thus alone, as it were, with the man whom I had for ſome days paſt ſo much endeavoured to avoid; yet I was deſirous of convincing myſelf even more fully, if poſſible, of his ſentiments for *Miſs Sedley*. "You look grave, *Sir Edward*," ſaid I, in a voice ſufficiently low not to be heard by the reſt of the company: "what lover but yourſelf, would [illegible] be inſpired with tenfold gaiety on the diſmiſſion of a rival, (for *Amyand* has left the *Lodge* on receiving a final negative to his propoſals;) whoſe ſuppoſed felicity had been ſo much the ſubject of his envy, and who ſeemed the only barrier to his hopes;" "What can my dear *Lady Aubigny* mean," interrupted he, "what *lover*, what *rival* is it of whom you are ſpeaking?" "the lover *yourſelf*, the rival *Mr. Amyand*," replied I, moſt aſſuredly; "know you not that he has left the *Lodge*," "You aſtoniſh me," anſwered he, "*Mr. Amyand* my rival!" "Nay, nay," ſaid I, interrupting him in my turn, "will you deſtroy all

all the merit of your confidence in me, by contradicting now what you ſo candidly avowed within theſe few days? or do you, on recollection, think me leſs worthy this proof of your reliance on my fidelity and ſecrecy?" At this moment more company was announced; and he had only time to ſay—"At length I comprehend you; yet, ah, *Lady Aubigny*! is it poſſible that you could have ſo miſtaken me." We parted without further conference; and the next morning the whole family ſet out on a viſit to *Sir Edward Meadows's*, at *Willbury*.—Judge then my ſurprize, when in a few hours after their departure, *Jervaſe* brought to me the letter, which I here tranſcribe.

"In what manner ſhall I dare to addreſs myſelf to *Lady Aubigny?* How, without incurring her diſpleaſure, preſume to entreat the liberty of laying before her the ſtate of t at heart, which prizes nothing ſo highly as her eſteem; fears nothing ſo greatly as offending her? Dare I, my dear madam, to venture at an attempt to rectify

rectify a miſtake, which an involuntary exclamation, when I was ſome time ſince happy in converſing with you, for a few minutes, appears to have given birth to, that my heart feels a prepoſſeſſion in favour of your amiable friend *Miſs Sedley*. A far different motive impelled me to wiſh myſelf in the ſituation of *Mr. Amyand*. If he was the ſubject of my envy, it was in that he found the object of his tenderneſs free from engagements, that muſt have deprived him of the liberty to avow with freedom the ſentiments with which ſhe had inſpired him; of preſuming to hope that he might one day behold her ſenſible to his tenderneſs.

Highly *Madam*, as I eſteem *Miſs Sedley*, lovely as I acknowledge her to be, it is impoſſible that I ſhould ever entertain for her any other ſentiment than that of friendly, and brotherly regard—To an unengaged heart it is perhaps ſcarcely poſſible that ſhe could long remain an object of indifference, but *mine*—ah, *Lady Aubigny*!

bigny! I have dared to avow to you, that it is the prey of hopeleſs paſſion, devoted to her whoſe mind alone, were every external beauty to fade, muſt hold me ever its captive; whoſe exalted virtues permit not the heart to hope, allow it not even to *wiſh*, a releaſe from its bondage. Enſlaved not by the frail tenure of perſonal charms alone, but fixed, unalterably fixed, by the ſuperior graces of an accompliſhed mind. To *Lady Aubigny* alone could I have ventured to have given this picture of the fair poſſeſſor of that heart, which ſhe believed to be only alive to the charms of *Miſs Sedley*; *Lady Aubigny* is the only perſon who could miſtake the portrait:— She cannot ever miſtake that of him who has now the honour to addreſs her, if the moſt inviolable reſpect, the moſt exalted eſteem for the *Counteſs of Aubigny*, appears to her on the canvas. It is true theſe are ſentiments which every one muſt feel who has the happineſs to know her; but if, joined to them, ſhe diſcovers every wiſh which can ſpring from the boſom of the ardent,

the

the undiſſembled friend, let her acknowledge the true repreſentative of her devoted

EDWARD MEADOWS."

LADY AUBIGNY IN CONTINUATION.

AND now my dear *Henrietta!* dare I to confeſs to *you* that but for this letter, the abſence of the *Meadows's* for one week, would have been to me an interval even more painful than I could have believed;—but this letter (for why ſhould I diſſemble with you?) have I not abjured all concealments, which could alone ſupply their loſs; how does it already ſeem to leſſen the diſtance that ſeparates us? how will it heighten the joy of their return? ah, how endear the meeting!

BEATRICE AUBIGNY.

LETTER

LETTER XLVI.

THE SAME

TO

THE SAME.

The Lodge.

READ the encloſed, *Henrietta!* which I have juſt received.

"The reſpectful compliments of *Sir Edward Meadows* attend *Lady Aubigny*, after his ſo late preſumption in approaching her, unauthorized by letter; he has not the hardineſs to venture into her ladyſhip's preſence, without her permiſſion. But he entreats *Lady Aubigny* will conſider that it is a long week ſince he has had the honour of ſeeing her, and that he waits with anxious impatience her leave to make perſonal enquiries after her health."

I returned a verbal reply that I ſhould be happy to ſee him; yet would he had come without this ceremony; the meeting would have been ſufficiently awkward, in any event; and this preparatory billet will but ſerve to heighten my embarraſſment. He is here already, I hear his voice in the *hall*. How very inconſiſtent is the human heart! two hours ago I was thinking, with pleaſure, that I ſhould ſoon ſee him; I would now methinks, fly to the *Antipodes* to avoid him. But he is at the door.

And here I am again alone, and with very little time to ſcribble farther, for he was commiſſioned it ſeems, to inſiſt on the family's ſpending the day at *the Cottage*, and I have not an hour to dreſs in, it being almoſt four when he left me; we were indeed alike ſurprized at finding it ſo late. I fear I behaved very fooliſhly, I am ſure I looked ſo; and ſet for ſome time in momentary dread of his entering on the ſubject of his letter;—but my apprehenſions were

were groundleſs. Nobly, generouſly delicate, is ever the whole tenor of his conduct and behaviour;—not a ſyllable reſpecting the ſubject of *Miſs Sedley*, not a word of the letter once eſcaped him; we talked only of general ſubjects; but ſuch are his powers of converſation, and ſo entertaining is he on the moſt trifling topic, that the morning ſlid inſenſibly away, and has left me only time to add to this, that I will reſume my pen to-morrow.

Charmingly did the remainder of the day and evening paſs imperceptibly away in the ſociety of this dear, this all-amiable family! — Whilſt *Lady Meadows*, *Lady Campbell*, and ſome others, were engaged at the card-table, we had a ſmall party in the muſic-room. *Sir Edward* ſung—played—and looked with a grace all his own: I never, I think, knew him ſo very agreeable; I had never before ſeen him ſo ~~vivid~~, ſo animated; he ſeemed to tread on air—yet, with all his gaiety, the ſame delicacy, and elegance of manners, which

ſo

ſo much diſtinguiſh him above, almoſt, every other man whom I have ever met with, marked his every word and action. *Miſs Meadows* was ſeated at the harpſichord, and called upon *Sir Edward* to ſing; he inſtantly aſſented, ſaying, if ſhe would give him leave, he would ſing an air, the muſic of which had not ever been publiſhed, if ſhe would do him the favour to play it;—as *Louiſa* is a perfect miſtreſs of muſic, ſhe readily complied, and *Sir Edward* giving to her the notes which he had taken from his pocket book, ſung with inexpreſſible ſweetneſs, and the moſt expreſſive tenderneſs, the following words.

Ah, gentle friendſhip! balmy pow'r!
Who fill'ſt my breaſt with warmer glow
Than, in the moſt enraptur'd hour,
The ardent lover e'er can know.

To Laura's *ear this truth convey,*
That thou, ſo potent in my heart,
Muſt yield my ſoul a grief to prey,
Should ſhe refuſe an equal part.

Ah!

Ah! bear to her this ſacred vow,
That, faithleſs, ne'er to her and thee,
My heart ſhall to another bow,
Or live from thy enchantments free.

Where did you get that ſong, ſaid *Louiſa*, when they had ended? it is very prettily ſet, and well adapted to the words. — Do you know the poet, or compoſer? — He only bowed an affirmative. *I* had no occaſion to aſk the queſtion, *Henrietta*; his looks, his manner, the ſubject, all too evidently proved to me who was both the writer and compoſer.—To me alone, however, was his ſecret betrayed. — Write to me, my dear *Henrietta*; but be *merciful* in your reproofs. Why ſhould I renounce the friendſhip of *Sir Edward Meadows*, only becauſe he is more than any other man deſerving of mine? We cannot, indeed, be lovers, but may we not therefore be friends? I was always much diſpleaſed with that ſentiment which ſays, "women may diſguiſe it if they think fit, but it is natural

natural to them, that they have no manner of approbation of men without ſome degree of love: He is therefore dangerous as a friend or viſitant, who is capable of gaining any eminent eſteem, *&c. &c.*" So then we are to diſcard all thoſe from the ſelect circle of our friends, who are worthy of being ranked in that number, and are to conſider it as dangerous to continue an acquaintance with any of the other ſex, whoſe virtues and qualifications entitle them to any ſhare of our eſteem; we are to affect the company and converſation of ſuch only, as it would be a penance to aſſociate with, and muſt conſider ourſelves in ſafety but *in the company* of thoſe whom we neither regard or eſteem. Strange doctrine! ſurely — and ſuch as ſhall never perſuade *me* to relinquiſh the ſociety, or the friendſhip of a man, for no better reaſon than that he is amiable and deſerving. I hope to read in your next, that good *Mrs. Morton* is better. I ſincerely ſympathize with you in the concern which you muſt neceſſarily feel from the ſerious indiſpoſition

poſition of ſuch a friend. Remember me *affectionately* to my *brother Sir Charles*. I *will* be, however, ~~after~~ often you may repeat your cruel renunciation of ~~one~~ me, and of my once more highly prized friendſhip, your

BEATRICE.

LETTER XLVII.

LADY SEYMOUR,

TO

LADY AUBIGNY.

Morton-Hall.

I HAVE not yet recovered from the ſevere ſhock your laſt letter has occaſioned me! Alas! my yet dear *Lady Aubigny!* I do, indeed, foreſee, if not the period, the too certain diminution of our friendſhip; of a friendſhip that I vainly hoped would have terminated but with our

lives: I ſee, too plainly, that the repeated admonitions of the trueſt affection will become irkſome to you; you will ſoon withdraw yourſelf from the pain of hearing advice, which you are predetermined not to follow: Such, however, is the ſincerity of that tenderneſs, which I even ſtill cheriſh for you, that I would much rather loſe both your confidence and friendſhip, cruelly as I fear I ſhould feel the loſs, than not again endeavour, ah! vainly, I fear, endeavour, (forgive me) you have lately leſſened yourſelf in my eſteem, which renders what I yet feel for you, rather the conſequence of pity and compaſſion for her, who is thus loſt to herſelf and me, than the unimpaired continuance of a friendſhip founded on belief of your merits; which led me to aſſure myſelf, that, however the vanity of youth, and an extreme gaiety of temper, might, for a while, render you too inattentive to the niceſt rules of rigid propriety, your *heart* would for ever abhor the thoughts of whatever was inconſiſtent with

with the purity of virtue, and of ſtrict honour.—I cannot yet believe that you are ſo totally loſt to every ſenſe of principle, and of virtuous delicacy, as your laſt letter would perſuade me to imagine. — Is it poſſible that you can repreſent yourſelf, to your own thoughts, as a married woman, encouraging the ſhameful, the inſidious addreſſes (for ſuch they are, whatever the ſpeciouſneſs of ſophiſtry may endeavour to aſſert to the contrary) of a lover; and not tremble at your danger?—As on the very brink of forfeiting every tie which binds ſociety, or renders *your* ſex eſtimable in the eyes of thoſe *whoſe* approbation only a woman of virtue and delicacy would be ambitious to engage, and not ſhrink with inward horror at the ſhocking view.—I know you will anſwer me, that you ſhould, indeed, tremble, could you believe it poſſible that you ſhould ever become a character replete with infamy; that were *Sir Edward* capable of entertaining an idea prejudicial to your honor, diſguſt and abhorrence would ſoon take

place, in your breaſt, of thoſe ſentiments of eſteem which you now feel for him, becauſe you believe him deſerving of them; that he aſks alone, what the ſtricteſt virtue need not bluſh to grant, the continuance of that eſteem, the reciprocity of friendſhip.—Something like this you have already advanced ~~as a~~ juſtification of a conduct, which, in fact, is not to be juſtified.

Let me then again, my dear miſguided friend, let me once again entreat you, to beware of that moſt fatal of all deceptions, the deception of your own heart. Do you think *Sir Edward* the leſs dangerous, nay I will add, the leſs diſhonourable, that he does not, by an open, and preſumptuous avowal of his guilty paſſion (though in fact the latter, which he ought never to have dared to write to you) but ill exempts him from being liable to even this imputation (as you yourſelf evidently acknowledge) alarm the virtue he is entruſted to preſerve unguarded. No longer, my dear

Beatrice,

Beatrice, attempt to thus impoſe on your-ſelf—be open to the conviction of your better knowledge, your reaſon, your judg-ment, and, above all, liſten attentively to that infallible guide, the dictates of *con-ſcience*; that heart can never err which follows always where ſhe points the way: She will force you to ſee the conduct of *Sir Edward Meadows* in its true light, not as the unaffectedly ſincere and artleſs *friend*, but as the inſidious and deſigning *lover*; a point of view in which you cannot, ſurely, place him, and not tremble at your fond credulity — without reſolving to baniſh every idea of him from your mind, and by re-entering, with redoubled earneſtneſs, into the paths of duty, repair a conduct, which has already, in ſome degree, with-drawn you from the dangerous precipice on which you ſtand, ready to leap into the gulph of eternal infamy and unutera-ble wretchedneſs, and injured both your huſ-band's honour and your own.

When do you viſit at *Weſtbury?* Does this new *friend*, as you will call him, eraſe

from your heart *every* other ſpecies of affection. *Lady Campbell's* being your gueſt, need be, ſurely, no prevention; you know how willingly ſhe will accompany you, and how welcome a viſitor ſhe cannot fail of being to your worthy *aunt*.—How very advantageous, as well as agreeable, to *Miſs Weſtbury* would be the ſociety of ſo well informed, ſo accompliſhed, and ſo amiable a companion, as the ſweet *Sedley*, you cannot but be equally ſenſible. — Indeed, *Beatrice*, I am *very, very angry* with you, and I am yet more *afflicted for* you.—The grief of heart, which I feel for the declining health of my ever-dear *Mrs. Morton*, and the really great concern your late letters have given me, ſo oppreſs my ſpirits, that all the tenderneſs, and ſoothing affection of my dear *Seymour*, is neceſſary to ſupport them from being quite overpowered by the moſt cruel apprehenſions; not knowing how little you, juſt now, deſerve to be remembered, he commiſſions me to convey his moſt affectionate regard to his *dear ſiſter*.

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He has obſerved my encreaſed uneaſineſs ſince the receipt of your laſt, and has been therefore ſomething inquiſitive concerning its contents; but, faulty as you are, I would not, methinks, willingly ſee you leſſened in his hitherto high opinion of you. — In the hope of, not only your amendment, but of your ſpeedy and entire recovery from the ſtrange delirium under which you have for ſome time ſuffered, I will again ſubſcribe myſelf your affectionate

HENRIETTA SEYMOUR.

LETTER XLVIII.

MISS SEDLEY,

TO

MISS RIVERS.

The Lodge.

AMYAND has left us, my dear *Maria*, and, as I underſtand, talks of quitting

England. I moſt ſincerely wiſh his happineſs wherever he goes; but will own to you, that I care not to how great a diſtance he removes; whether it has been his encreaſed importunity, or the irkſomeneſs of having ever before my eyes the object of my indifference in the character of a lover, which has occaſioned that indifference to verge towards diſlike, I do not know; but certain it is (and yet I hate myſelf for my ingratitude) that he grew every day more and more unpleaſing to me; and I am much afraid, had he remained with us longer, I ſhould have felt for him no other ſentiment than that of utter averſion.—His weariſome perſeverence has, I really believe, quite altered my temper: I find myſelf grown fretful and peeviſh, and have, once or twice, treated poor *Fanny*, who you know accompanied me to *England*, with a harſhneſs for which I have afterwards deteſted myſelf: My ſpirits too are depreſſed, I know not why; in ſhort, the whole ſtate of my mind is changed: I have no lon-

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ger pleaſure in ſociety; yet find no ſatisfaction in my own thoughts, even in the preſence of my ever-dear *Lady Campbell*, who, I think, obſerves the alteration which my temper has experienced: I feel a painful reſtraint, whilſt the recovered gaiety, and good-humour of the *Counteſs*, which once ſo charmed me, ſeems now a reproach to the gloom which pervades my countenance, and, inſtead of relieving, adds weight, I really think, to the oppreſſion of my ſpirits:—However, as he is now gone, I hope I ſhall again recover myſelf; it is impoſſible to imagine any thing more generouſly kind, more tenderly indulgent, than has been the conduct of my dear benefactreſs on this occaſion. — By her permiſſion, I myſelf acquainted *Mr. A* — with the utter impoſſibility of my ever conſidering him in any other light than that of a friend whom I ſhould ever eſteem, and by whoſe partiality I ſhould always conſider myſelf as honoured and obliged; I had therefore to entreat, as well for his happineſs as my own, that he

would urge me no farther on a ſubject which could not but be equally painful to us both.

I was ſpeaking juſt now of *Lady Aubigny's* great ſpirits; they were, however, a ſhort time paſt apparently as untuned as my own; but her dejection was, perhaps, the effect of indiſpoſition. Her ladyſhip alarmed us all very much a week or two ſince, by a fainting fit, which ſeized her as ſhe was walking in the garden, and in conſequence of which ſhe continued very unwell for ſeveral days. You cannot conceive anything more anxious than was *Sir Edward Meadows* (who is almoſt always here, and with whom ſhe was walking at the time ſhe fainted) during her illneſs; but this was to me matter of far leſs ſurpriſe, than the very ſudden and ſtrange alteration obſervable in her conduct towards him at this time. She evidently avoided him, and not once allowed him to ſee her, though he called conſtantly twice every day to enquire after her health, and although

although ſhe received other viſitors in her dreſſing-room. — On the evening of that day, in which I had opened my whole heart to my more than parent on the ſubject of *Mr. Amyand's* diſpleaſing addreſſes, and been treated by her with an exceſs of generoſity and goodneſs that powerfully affected my heart, *Sir Edward* accidentally joined me in the garden; he ſaw me in tears, for my whole ſoul was melted to unuſual ſoftneſs by the careſſes, and tender expreſſions of my dear benefactreſs. After gracefully entreating my pardon for his intruſion on my ſorrow, he requeſted to know the occaſion of my tears, and expreſſed his concern at ſeeing me ſo apparently diſtreſſed. — I ſoon diſcovered that he was alarmed for *the Counteſs*, and that he feared my tears were cauſed by the encreaſe of her indiſpoſition. — The earneſt manner in which he conjured me to acquaint him with her ſituation, the tremulous tone of his voice, the delight which ſpoke from his eyes, when I aſſured him that her ladyſhip was almoſt well, gave

ſufficient proof that he felt for her a friendſhip of no common fervour; he profeſſes himſelf too the friend of your *Sedley*; and, indeed, the gentle goodneſs of his nature prompts him to be ſuch to every one whoſe intereſt, or happineſs, he can in any way promote, or who is not totally undeſerving of his kindneſs,' I believe him therefore zealous for my felicity. *Sir Edward Meadows* has a ſoul that ſoars above the meanneſs of flattery—of deceit: I may depend then on his friendſhip; a friendſhip, however, far — far leſs ardent than that which his heart acknowledges for *Lady Aubigny*, whom I readily confeſs, indeed, greatly worthy of ſuch an ~~inviolable~~ diſtinction; nor have I the abſurd vanity to conſider myſelf as her equal in either merit, or accompliſhments: — It is my pride, however, that I poſſeſs ſome ſmall ſhare in his eſteem; he has deigned to aſſure me of it, and this is ſufficient to raiſe me in my own. I know not how, now I have wandered into this digreſſion to return from it. While we were in converſation

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the *Counteſs* paſſed within view, and, on ſeeing us, hurried into the houſe, and to her own apartment, ſatisfying herſelf with returning only by a ſlight inclination of her head, the reſpectful ſalutation of *Sir Edward*, who, with myſelf, endeavoured, but in vain, to overtake her. *My* ſurpriſe, and *his* mortification, on this occaſion, were, I believe, nearly equal; he ſoon retired (it was evident to ſee) in a ſtate of mind bordering on extreme uneaſineſs.

The very next evening he came in, juſt as the *Counteſs* had retired from the card-table, and ſeated herſelf on a ſopha at the farther end of the room; they preſently entered into a ſeemingly earneſt converſation, and ſpoke together in a low tone of voice, till interrupted by the entrance of freſh viſitors: This ſhort conference, however ſeemed to have been ſufficient to reſtore to *Sir Edward* all his former chearfulneſs, and even to have given him an additional gaiety of temper.—Her ladyſhip too appeared through the evening to have

have acquired, in a few ſhort moments, the health and ſpirits which had for many days deſerted her, and which a leſs ſkilful phyſician than her *friend* had vainly endeavoured to reſtore. He was abſent for a week, but is again returned; and whatever may have been the occaſion of interruption to the harmony of their friendſhip, it ſeems now not only to have ceaſed, but the little interruption apparently ſuſtained ſeems to have more ſtrongly cemented their mutual confidence and regard. Who would believe that I ſhould write thus much without ſpeaking of a wedding, which happened not later than yeſterday; that of *Miſs Charlotte Meadows* to *Mr. Foreſt*; the ceremony was performed in the chapel of *the Cottage*, by *Dr. Worthington*, and in the preſence of only their own family, and that of *the Lodge*; *Miſs Meadows* and your *Lavinia* being honoured as bride maids, and *Sir Edward* acting as father to the bride.—If the language of looks may be believed, *Maria*, there were thoſe preſent, who, had not one unfortu-

nate

nate inſuperable bar oppoſed, would have, without great reluctance, followed the example of the happy pair.—My heart heaved the ſigh of pity, as I perceived a trickling tear ſteal down a *beauteous cheek*; I thought it ſeemed to ſay, Ah! why does ſordid intereſt ever bind our vows, whilſt the heart is left to a freedom dangerous, as inſipid? This ſigh was followed by a ſecond, when the tear was anſwered by a look which expreſsly ſaid, *Ah! why were we not thus bleſt?* The new-married pair ſet off immediately for *Sir William Foreſt's, at Willbury*, where they will remain but a ſhort time, as they intend viſiting the *Spa*. It is long ſince you have wrote to me, *Maria*; your letters are *ever* dearly welcome to me; in this hour of diſſatisfaction with myſelf, and almoſt all around me, they would be a moſt acceptable cordial to the fooliſhly fainting ſpirits of your

LAVINIA SEDLEY.

Do you always remember me to the dear inmates of that favourite *convent* which

which I may, perhaps, have reaſon to regret the having quitted. O! what an ungrateful diſcontent is there hanging round this perverſe heart of mine, in deſpight of my beſt reſolves.

LETTER XLIX.

MR. PEMBERTON,

TO

SIR EDWARD MEADOWS.

Oak-Hill.

NO! I have done with argument; nor reaſon, nor principle, nor the honour of her whom you affect to prize, will have weight with a man who can thus ſin againſt conviction. You will tell me, perhaps, that I am ill-qualified to counſel on ſuch ſubjects. It is but too true, that the recollection of my own errors is a burthen ſufficiently oppreſſive; yet

yet remember, *Meadows*, guilty as I am, my angel was not the property of another: I invaded not the ſacred rights of a fellow-creature; I aimed not, as an elegant and pathetic writer feelingly expreſſes himſelf, to "pluck the roſe from the matrimonial pillow, and to plant a thorn in its ſtead." Such atrociouſneſs of guilt my ſoul never knew, nor could have borne the reflection of ſuch an inſult to ſociety, or ſuch an indignity to religion and virtue. — Talk no more of our friendſhip. — My heart holds no communication with the infringers of matrimonial faith.—My eſteem dwells not with him who can live no longer in his own. The ſeparation I will own, adds a pang greater than I thought it could again feel, to a heart which I now find is doomed to be alike unbleſt in love, and friendſhip. — Freed at length from all attachment to this life deprived of the woman I adored by my own guilt, and ſeparated from the man whom I once loved and honoured, by his, of a yet deeper dye, I wait, in ſolitary wretchedneſs, the impatiently

Mr. Pratt

patiently expected hour, that will releaſe me from a world where I have no longer either to hope or to fear; no object of confidence or affection, and in which I have found ſo little felicity: I can ſtill wiſh you well, lament your weakneſs, and pray for your reſtoration; but you will hear no more from

HENRY PEMBERTON.

LETTER L.

LADY AUBIGNY,

TO

LADY SEYMOUR.

The Lodge.

I AM going ~~on~~ a ~~voyage~~ *journey*, my dear *Henrietta*, at the earneſt requeſt of our favourite *Charlotte*, now (as the papers will have informed you) *Mrs. Foreſt*: I am preparing

preparing to accompany herſelf, and *Mr. Foreſt* to the *Spa*. *Lady Campbell* and *Lavinia* will be of the party: *Lady Meadows* is too fearful of the *ſea* to venture going with us; and *Miſs Meadows* chuſes not to leave her mother. *Lord Aubigny's* engagements will not, he ſays, permit him to attend us, but he will join us there in a few weeks. I need ſcarcely tell you that I had the pleaſure of ſeeing the hand of *Charlotte* given, by her brother, to her delighted *Foreſt*: Our whole family were preſent at the ceremony, and ours only; *Louiſa*, and *Miſs Sedley*, were of courſe the *bride-maids*, and they looked themſelves worthy of the honour. — The *bride* herſelf never appeared to more advantage :—Her dreſs, a travelling one, was the model of ſimple elegance, and infinitely becoming, both to her features, and complexion. They ſet off for *Willbury*, almoſt immediately after the ceremony, where they were received with every demonſtration of joy and gladneſs; inſomuch that it was not the fault of the kind inhabitants

habitants of the village, that it did not blaze in an univerſal conflagration, to the honour of the day, ſo extenſive were their bonfires, &c.—Nor to their want of zeal, in reſpect to the libations poured out to their healths, muſt be imputed any indiſpoſition, ſhould they be ſo unfortunate to experience ſuch, for at leaſt one twelvemonth to come.

With what warmth of affection ~~was~~ the dear girl ſaluted by *Sir William*, and her *ladyſhip*, as their long-loved, long-deſired, ſiſter, you will eaſily imagine.—It is not without great reluctance that they conſent to part from her, for the propoſed expedition, and they inſiſt on her returning to them as ſoon as ſhe again arrives in *England*. *Lady Meadows*, and *Louiſa*, will paſs the time of our abſence at *Willbury*. I have reſolved not to reply to the unreaſonable grave part of your letter, with which I ſhould have been ſtill more diſpleaſed, did I not conſider myſelf as, in ſome degree, the occaſion of what offends me,

me, by having treated in a too ſerious way, what a little reflection, and obſervation, has ſince ſhewn me, deſerved neither my own, nor your, reproofs. The caſe is, that we have been both miſtaken in our judgement, in having given the name of a *too tender* partiality to what was, in fact, but animated friendſhip, and perfect eſteem. I had never felt the paſſion of love; I had heard of it much, and finding in my heart that preference for uncommon merit, which it muſt always command from every mind not wholly torpid, and inſenſible; alarmed too by the ſuggeſtions of your apprehenſive tenderneſs, I really began to fear, and reproach myſelf for, a ſentiment, which it was reprehenſible to indulge; but which I am now ſatisfied is perfectly innocent and irreproachable; here then, let this ſubject drop, and let me entreat you to reſt aſſured, that you have nothing to fear for me. The friend of *Lady Seymour* will not ever forget that ſhe is the wife of *Aubigny*; but neither will ſhe abſurdly ſacrifice to prejudice, and opinion, the ſatisfaction

faction reſulting from the ſociety, and friendſhip, of the firſt of men. The dignity of his mind; the integrity of his principles; the honour, delicacy, and elegance of his character, are equally guarantees for the propriety of his conduct towards me, and I rely on them with a confidence the moſt implicit. I ſhall write to you again as ſoon as we arrive at the *Spa*, and hope to be ſoon happy in your reply. Moſt earneſtly do I wiſh that the intelligence of *Mrs. Morton's* recovery may make a part of your letter. I am ever, my dear *Henrietta*'s affectionate and grateful,

BEATRICE AUBIONY.

LETTER

LETTER LI.

THE SAME

TO

THE SAME.

Spa.

WE arrived here, my dear friend, nearly a fortnight ſince, (forgive my not writing to you ſooner, continued engagements rendered it impracticable) after a journey the moſt delightful, though much longer than it uſually is at this ſeaſon of the year; our whole party in excellent ſpirits, and in the beſt health imaginable.—This place is not at preſent very full of company, but many families are daily expected; amongſt whom, it is ſaid, are the *Duke and Ducheſs of C — d.* The arrival of the latter, if, indeed, it is true that her *Royal Highneſs* has ſuch intentions, will be a material acquiſition to the ſociety of this

this agreeable ſpot. — I know that, with me, you admire and love the fine ſenſe, the vivacity, and the uniform good temper, of this charming woman, who gives as much grace to, as ſhe can poſſibly receive diſtinction from, the high rank to which ſhe has been ſo deſervedly raiſed. We were agreeably ſurpriſed by meeting here, on the very evening of our arrival, *Mr. Pemberton*, whom we all ſuppoſed to have been buried in his ſolitude in *Derbyſhire*. *Sir Edward's* joy (for *Mr. Foreſt* abſolutely preſſed *him* into the party) was infinitely great; but for himſelf, his dejection ſeems encreaſed to a degree that ſcarce allowed him to ſhew, on his countenance, the delight which, I am ſure, he, nevertheleſs, inwardly felt from the unexpected meeting; yet, notwithſtanding this redoubled gloom, I know not if, as I once thought, the charms of youth and beauty have utterly loſt all influence with him; he really ſeemed ſtruck—inſtantaneouſly ſtruck with *Miſs Sedley*; he even ſtarted when I introduced her to him,

"*As*

"*As if a bee had ſtung his heart,*" and gazed on her, for near half a minute, without ſpeaking; then recollecting himſelf, after paying her his compliments with an embarraſſed air, he walked haſtily to the window, and, after ſtanding there a few minutes, quitted the room abruptly. *Sir Edward*, who had obſerved him, apprehended, I imagine, ſome *ſudden* illneſs; for he followed him, and ſoon after they returned together. *Mr. Pemberton's* features had recovered their uſual melancholy compoſure; but I obſerved that he frequently fixed his eyes on *Lavinia*, with a ſteadineſs that even confuſed her; nay, he continues ſo to do; attaches himſelf almoſt ſolely to her, and ſeems to feel more ſatisfaction when converſing with her, than I have ever obſerved in him upon any occaſion. I have rallied *Lavinia* on the ſubject; but ſhe will not allow that there is the leaſt mixture of love in the partiality with which he diſtinguiſhes her. She is equally fond of his company; but I do not believe that

ſhe entertains for him any more tender ſentiment than that of a grateful feeling, for the friendly attachment which he ſeems to have formed for her, and which, ſhe will have it, is merely owing to his conſidering her as an orphan, who, though moſt happy in the protection and love of the beſt of women, he may yet conſider as the ſubject of ſympathetic concern, ſo early loſt to the tender endearments of parental affection. It is certain that *Lavinia's* ſituation is calculated to engage the attention of a thoughtful mind, the native tenderneſs of which, it ſhould ſeem, has been yet farther ſoftened by ſome ſtroke of adverſe fate; whilſt her youth, beauty, and ſweetneſs of diſpoſition, cannot but make her an intereſt in the hearts of all who know her;—but, I muſt own, I know not to what, if not to a ſudden paſſion, to attribute the evident agitation, which the very firſt ſight of her occaſioned in him.

We

We have heard, and we have read, of what has been called *love* at *firſt ſight*; but that *Mr. Pemberton* ſhould have become a ſubject of the blind boy's caprice, is what I ſhould never have expected, nor can even yet believe; the leſs ſo, as he has with him a young man of foreign extraction, of birth and independent fortune, (who has been left under his guardianſhip for the remainder of his minority, which will expire in leſs than a twelvemonth) by his father, lately deceaſed, who ſeems already ſenſible to the charms of *Lavinia*; which, ſo far from wounding the feelings of, ſeems to give pleaſure to, this myſterious man. As to herſelf, ſhe ſeems, at preſent, inſenſible to the marked attention with which he treats her; yet, were it not for a certain *Sir Somebody*, I ſhould think him a likely man to make an impreſſion on her heart. He is elegant, handſome, ſenſible, accompliſhed, and well-bred, with a great ſhare of vivacity, which renders him a favourable contraſt to the too ſerious, and ſometimes

formal, *Amyand*, of ſlighted memory. *Lady Campbell* is not unobſervant on the occaſion, neither is ſhe ill-pleaſed. *Mr. Pemberton* ſpeaks of him in the higheſt terms, and came here purpoſely to meet him, he having ſignified his wiſh to take the *Spa* in his route from *Italy*: (the name of this new *hero* on our ſtage is *D'Albiac.*) We are then a moſt happy groupe, all equally ſatisfied, all pleaſed, and pleaſing; and were *you*, my dear *Henrietta*, of our party, imagination could not form a delight more exquiſite than that which I ſhould experience; ſurrounded as I ſhould then be, by, almoſt, all whom I moſt love, by whom I am moſt beloved; but ſome alloy there muſt ever be to all earthly felicity.—Sufficient, however, is the portion which I now enjoy, to ſubject me to the ſhameful imputation of ingratitude, did I not acknowledge to be myſelf your happy, your *greatly* happy,

BEATRICE AUBIGNY.

LETTER

LETTER LII.

MISS SEDLEY,

TO

MISS RIVERS.

Spa.

YOU will be ſurprized my dear *Maria*, when you ſee from whence I date this letter, I ſhould doubtleſs have informed you of our intended ~~voyage~~ *Journey*, but that its ſuddenneſs left me not leiſure ſo to do. *Mr.* and *Mrs. Foreſt*, having a wiſh to viſit the *Spa*, prevailed with *Lady Campbell*, and *Sir Edward Meadows*, to accompany them, of courſe I was included in the party. We have been here ſome time, and I take ſhame to myſelf, that I have not ſooner acquainted you with my temporary change of place; I little expected, when I formerly have heard you ſpeak of the happy months you once paſſed at the *Spa*, that I ſhould be ever actually preſent to the ſcenes which I had ~~heard~~ ſo well deſcribed; but here I am, and a very agreeable place I find it.—It is

aſtoniſhing how very much I feel my ſpirits revived by the change of air, of ſcene, and the delightful, chearful, and pleaſing ſociety, of which I have the felicity to partake. *Sir Edward* has met here, totally unexpectedly, with his moſt intimate friend, a *Mr. Pemberton*, who with a young foreigner, his ward, whoſe name is *D'Albiac*, have joined our party.—*Mr. Pemberton* is not a young man, being I believe more than forty, yet he is ſtill handſome; his figure is noble and graceful, and his manners poliſhed; he has a melancholy ſoftneſs in his countenance, that is extremely intereſting; I underſtand from *Lady Aubigny*, that he has met with ſome diſappointment in his youth, though of what nature ſhe knows not;—habitual grief however ſeems only to have ~~entered~~ extended (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) his diſpoſition, without giving it any mixture of that cynic moroſeneſs, too frequently ſeen in thoſe, whoſe early proſpects have been clouded by misfortunes; yet a deep dejection is pictured on every feature of his countenance; whilſt his

his ſilence and apparent reſerve, particularly in mixed companies, renders him liable, from thoſe who are ſtrangers to him, to the imputation of an high pride, or unpleaſantneſs of temper;—but it is a ſtranger only, who can thus judge of him; you will not be ſurprized at my partiality for *Mr. Pemberton*, when I tell you that he honours me with a particularly friendly attention; he has been told that I am the orphan daughter of an eſteemed friend of my loved *Lady Campbell*; and the ſoft melancholy of his mind, leads him to ſympathize with every child of misfortune; ſuch, doubtleſs, he conſiders me; deſtiture as I am of natural friends; although ſo bleſt in the affection and tenderneſs of her, whoſe generoſity, and kindneſs ſo well ſupply their place, that I can be ſcarcely ſaid to be ignorant of the feelings of filial, or deprived of the endearments of, at leaſt, *maternal* love; but hence, I am aſſured it is, that, prompted by the native goodneſs of his heart, he attaches himſelf to me with a friendly ſolicitude for my welfare, which

makes me feel for him, in return, ſentiments nearly correſpondent with thoſe which I entertain for my dear and revered benefactreſs, who ſeems pleaſed with the progreſs which I appear daily to make in his favour.—It muſt certainly have been the mere effect of fancy; but I really thought when he was firſt introduced to us, that I had ſomewhere ſeen him before; I have aſſuredly ſeen a face nearly reſembling his; one would have almoſt ſuppoſed even that he had ſome idea of the ſame kind reſpecting me; I thought he looked at me with a momentary ſurprize, and during the courſe of the day, obſerved more than once his eyes fixed on my face, with a ſteadfaſtneſs that almoſt diſconcerted me; but I have ſince known how to account for this; by obſerving that he is frequently ſo abſent and *reveuſe*, as to appear entirely engroſſed by ſome particular object, which it has been afterwards evident he had not ever obſerved; ſo loſt is he at times in himſelf. Will you not think that I am grown inſufferably vain my dear *Maria* (yet indeed

deed I do not think it vanity that leads me to the thought) if I tell you that, I am already ſuſpicious of finding a ſecond *Amyand* in *Mr. D'Albiac*; that is, I fear the ſame want of taſte which led the former to ſolicit for the heart he could never obtain, will be found in the latter, for the ſimilitude reaches no farther;—he is infinitely more agreeable than *Mr. Amyand*; yet I hope that the partiality which his marked attentions, his tender aſſiduities, and his viſible anxiety, whenever I walk, ride, dance, or converſe with any other, ſeem to indicate, may prove, and indeed it is moſt probable that it will, rather a tranſient liking, than a ſteady attachment: (which could not have well taken place on ſo ſlight a knowledge of my diſpoſition) I foreſee in the ſatisfied looks of *Lady Campbell*, *Mr. Pemberton*, and indeed in thoſe of all my kind friends, whenever any little tenderneſs eſcapes him, which happen not unfrequently, that I muſt incur the imputation of a froward ungrateful girl,

who ſeem reſolved to diſappoint the wiſhes of all who intereſt themſelves in her happineſs; ſhould I reject, a ſecond time, an offer which would be ſo far ſuperior to my pretentions, either as to merit or fortune; or, on the other hand, be guilty perhaps, of an injuſtice to himſelf, which his generoſity would ill deſerve, by yielding to him a worthleſs hand, unaccompanied by my *whole heart*.—I think *Maria* you muſt relieve me at once from my ſuſpence, and my fear (which after all perhaps are ſufficiently ridiculous) by ſhewing yourſelf amongſt us: ah! would that you might, you would reclaim him from the error of falſe taſte, if it be true that he has fallen into it; and I ſhould give my ready aſſent to the reformation. You will believe I muſt think highly of him, to conceive him worthy of you; the eulogiums indeed of *Mr. Pemberton*, in his favour, do not a little contribute to raiſe him in my eſteem;—I certainly think him ſuperior to any man I ever yet have ſeen, *one* only excepted; and in what compariſon muſt not

that

that one be excepted.—To be deemed ſecond in the general eſtimation to *him*, might almoſt gratify the ambition of the moſt aſpiring,—nor am I ſingular in this opinion; dear to my heart is the lovely, but I fear the ill-fated ſharer of my ſentiments; the mutual, but unauthorized, and unhappy partiality, which I have long ſince ſuſpected, is at length but ill concealed, I am much apprehenſive, from others;—my dear *Lady Campbell*, though ſilent, I can ſee, begins, ſince our being here, to perceive, what indeed they are at too little pains to diſguiſe; and I diſcover that it gives her equal concern, and embarraſſment;—*Mrs. Foreſt*, likewiſe has been a little attentive to them lately; and I think I can obſerve it is in conſequence of ſuch attention that ſhe has expreſſed a wiſh to ſhorten the time of our intended ſtay at *the Spa*;—but as *Lord Aubigny* is now daily expected to join us, *Lady Campbell* has not ſeconded the propoſal, as otherwiſe, I doubt not, ſhe would have done.—I muſt here cloſe my epiſtle; *Fanny* having juſt

reminded me, for the third time, that I ſhall not be dreſſed by dinner time;—and can you expect that friendſhip ſhould ſtand the teſt when put in competition with that formidable rival the toilette; alas! no; You will find the contrary in my adieu; Yet am I not leſs than ever your affectionate

LAVINIA SEDLEY.

LETTER

LETTER LIII.

LADY AUBIGNY,

TO

LADY SEYMOUR.

Spa.

TO what a ſurprizing, to what an affecting, to what a pleaſingly painful ſcene have I been witneſs? my dear *Henrietta*; and to do it juſtice would require the pen of a *Richardſon*,—how unequal then muſt mine be to the taſk?—I know not if, even the immortal author above named, could give it ſo high a colouring as the feeling heart of ſenſibility would paint to its own thought. It is two days ſince that (our whole party ſeated round the table, engaged in ſocial and chearful converſation dinner being juſt ended;) a ſervant brought to *Lady Campbell* a ſmall caſket, containing ſome jewels; which had been by her order reſet for *Lavinia*;

Lavinia; and which not being finiſhed e'er we left town, had been, by the jeweller, entruſted to the care of a lady, known to *Lady Campbell*, who was juſt arrived.—after peruſing the billet which accompanied them, her ladyſhip opened the caſket, and taking from thence a ſet of pearls, preſented them to *Miſs Sedley*, ſaying, with a good humoured ſmile, have you the humility, *Lavinia*, to believe that theſe trifles can add any thing to your charms, or do you, with *Goldſmith's young woman*, ſlight every borrowed charm that art ſupplies, and ſcorn to ſhare with art the triumph of your eyes!—How ſay you? purſued ſhe pleaſantly, muſt I return them to the caſket. No, indeed, madam, ſaid the delighted *Lavinia*, with more than uſual chearfulneſs, while the tear of gratitude gliſtened in either eye;—I am far from deſpiſing ſuch auxiliaries; and ſince you have the goodneſs to deſign me ſo valuable a preſent, I ſhall receive them with the moſt grateful pleaſure; but believe me, my dear madam, taking and kiſſing

her

her hand, for ſhe had riſen from her ſeat, and now ſtood by *Lady Campbell's* chair; infinitely ſhort is the ſatisfaction they will give me, conſidered either as intrinſically valuable, or as ornamental, to that of the reflection that it is to your goodneſs and tender affection for me, to which I am indebted, not only for them, but for whatever can give me either pleaſure, or any kind of conſideration in the eyes and opinion of the world;—as ornaments I confeſs they will be pleaſing to me, but as pledges of *your love, ineſtimable.*

As ſhe ſpoke, *Mr. Pemberton*, who had gazed intently on her, from the moment that *Lady Campbell* had began to addreſs her, ſeemed loſt in thought;—and now ſuddenly ſtarting from his chair, haſtily traverſed the room, muttering to himſelf ſeveral incoherent expreſſions; of which we could only underſtand, *voice, feature, character, her angel-ſelf.* We all looked round us, affected and ſurprized, although uſed to his abſences and reveries; his ſud-

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den emotion at once aſtoniſhed and alarmed us.—*Sir Edward* intimated by a look, his wiſh that we would not ſeem to obſerve him, whilſt *his* countenance expreſſed equal wonder with our own; we obeyed, and he continued to walk the room with much agitation, though in ſilence. Whilſt *Lavinia*, who had not perceived his attention to her till he roſe, uneaſy, and confuſed without knowing wherefore, remained by *Lady Campbell*; you are a good girl, ſaid her ladyſhip, after a few moments pauſe only, and without ſeeming to have noticed the emotion of *Mr. Pemberton*; and I have no doubt of the truth of your aſſertion;—but here, my dear child, is what you will prize yet more highly; I return to you the portrait of your lovely mother; tho' ſhort our acquaintance, ſhe was dear to my heart, and will live forever in my remembrance; and with it you will receive that of your father; I took them from you but for the purpoſe of having the diamonds repaired, which had by ſome acci-

dent

dent ſuffered by the ſalt water.—I need not recommend to you to preſerve them carefully. With a religious care will I preſerve them, replied *Lavinia*, preſſing each picture alternately to her lips; her mind variouſly affected, finding relief in her tears; *Lady Campbell* kiſſed her cheek—ſit down my dear girl, ſaid her ladyſhip, I did not deſign to affect you thus. *Mr. D'Albiac*, purſued ſhe (turning towards him) you, who are always the inſpirer of mirth, cannot you perſuade this good girl to ſubſtitute a chearful ſmile in lieu of thoſe pearly drops, which are not ſuch as I meant to preſent her with.

D'Albiac, who had viewed her with the moſt evident delight and admiration, and ſeemed to ſhare in every emotion of her heart, roſe inſtantly from his ſeat, and taking *Lavinia's* hand, leading her to her's, bowed gratefully to *Lady Campbell*; "Will *Miſs Sedley*," ſaid he, "permit me, authorized by her honoured *Lady Campbell*, to entreat that ſhe will not too much indulge

dulge the luxury of tender ſenſibility; moſt amiable indeed, and even pleaſing, while painful; but injurious, if too far encouraged, to a delicacy of feeling like her own. He drew a chair near her as he ſpoke; and *Lavinia*, with a graceful ſmile, which I am ſure found its inſtant way to his heart, bowed her acknowledgments for his attention. *Mr. Pemberton*, ſeemingly ignorant of all that had been paſſing, now reſumed his ſeat.—I ſaw that *Lady Campbell* obſerved him with a particularity, which however I ſhould not perhaps have marked, had it not been accompanied by a viſible anxiety and emotion.

Mrs. Foreſt having requeſted of *Lavinia* a ſight of the bracelets, had them now in her hand; "I proteſt," ſaid ſhe, "*Mr. Pemberton*," (in her uſual lively ſtile;) "were you about twenty years younger, and would you diſmiſs ſome portion of your ſerioufneſs, and aſſume ſomething of this ſprightly air, this picture might paſs for you;

you;—there is a ſtrong reſemblance in the features; although it muſt be owned that the ſimilitude goes no farther, the expreſſion being very different; do you not think, madam," purſued ſhe, and addreſſing herſelf to *Lady Campbell*, "that *Miſs Sedley* is extremely like this picture of her mother?" "Doubtleſs," anſwered her ladyſhip, "I have always thought her the very image of my dear friend, of whom that portrait is a ſtriking reſemblance."—"Does *Lavinia* reſemble her leſs in voice, manner, and ſentiment, than in perſon."—She glanced her eye towards *Mr. Pemberton*, as ſhe ſpoke; whoſe mind ſeemed to undergo a variety of emotion during the whole of this converſation. He leant forward to view the portrait, which *Mrs. Foreſt* gave into his hand, from which it inſtantly dropped, and he fell lifeleſs to the floor.—*Lavinia* ſcreamed involuntarily, and was running towards him, but reſtrained by *D'Albiac*, who thought he had really expired. *Mr. Foreſt*,

and

and *Sir Edward* flew to raiſe him; *Mrs. Foreſt*, who rang the bell with violence the inſtant ſhe ſaw him fall, ſent immediately for ~~a phyſician~~, ſuppoſing with me, he had fallen in a fit of apoplexy; before he could arrive, however, we were in ſome meaſure relieved from the terror which this thought had occaſioned us; by proper applications, his ſuſpended ſenſes returned; he opened his eyes and looking wildly around him, exclaimed, "Where, oh! where is the bleſſed image of my long loſt *Clara?* have I not ſeen her?—can it be illuſion all?"—At length recovering farther, and ſeemingly gathering ſtrength from agony, and impatience; "Tell me, madam, I conjure you ~~to~~ tell me," cried he, looking wildly on *Lady Campbell*, "from whom had you that picture; that dear reſemblance of my angel *Clara?*" From the ever regretted original," replied ſhe, in a voice ſcarcely audible, and nearly over powered by the flattering, yet affecting ideas, which by this time began

to

to take full poſſeſſion of her mind. "She left it to my care, together with that of the father of her child, as the only legacy ſhe had to bequeath to her;" he caſt now a look on the other picture; it was his own: in an inſtant he was in the arms of the tumultuouſly agitated and half-fainting *Lavinia*; who unable either to move or to ſpeak, over-powered with the conflicting emotions of hope, fear, and ſurprize, was ſobbing aloud on the boſom of *Lady Campbell*, for whom *D'Albiac* had quitted his chair, and who kneeling before her, held the hand of his adored *Sedley* in his, whilſt his eyes wandered with enquiring ſolicitude from *Pemberton* to *Lavinia*, from *Lavina* to *Pemberton*, almoſt as unable to ſpeak as ~~myſelf~~ himſelf. As for *Charlotte* and myſelf, we ſat fixed in mute aſtoniſhment, and ſcarcely aſſured that we were not in a dream, but from a ſenſible feeling of painfully affecting ſenſations;—*Sir Edward*, watching with unſpeakable anxiety the emotions of his friend, and terrified

by

by his utter inability to ſpeak for ſome moments; at length the words *my child! my child!* interrupted by ſobs which rendered them almoſt inarticulate, burſt from his lips; nor could he proceed. "O ſir," ſaid *Lavinia*, raiſing her head, and looking on him, with a wildneſs nearly equal to his own, "What mean you? ah? flatter me not with falſe hopes, I have no parent. Have you not told me, madam," again turning to *Lady Campbell*, "that my father died e'er yet I ſaw the light." "No, he lives," interrupted he, "thy father lives; in me, behold the author of thy birth, but how unworthy of a child like thee! ah! let me once more fold thee in my arms, while by that ſacred name I am dear to thee; ere yet thy knowledge of my crimes draw down on me the additional puniſhment of thy deteſtation, and contempt!" *Lavinia* lifted up her eyes to heaven; ſhe had no longer the power of ſpeech. *Lady Campbell* (her eyes bathed in tears) now interpoſed, and entreated him,

him, for *Lavinia's* ſake, as well as his own, to endeavour at regaining ſome degree of compoſure, and to ſuffer her to retire for a few moments, till the preſent agitation of her ſpirits ſhould a little ſubſide; when obſerving her, a ſecond time, almoſt lifeleſs, exclaimed with a half frantic air; "Wretch that I am! bleſſed ſpirit! have I likewiſe murdered thy child?" then, in a ſoftened tone, he continued, "Go my earth's only comfort, thou late found treaſure of my ſoul, compoſe thy troubled ſpirits; preſerve, with choiceſt care, preſerve a life, a health, which loſt, would drive thy new found father to unequaled, to irrecoverable deſpair;" tenderly embracing her, as ſhe threw her arms arround his neck in tranſport, in joy too big for utterance, he again conjured her to endeavour the compoſure of her mind;—and ſuffered her to retire to her apartment, whether *Lady Campbell*, *Charlotte*, and myſelf, attended her.—Her tears flowed freely, and wearied at length by the agitations which her ſpirits had undergone,

ſhe

ſhe after ſome time fell into a ſlumber, from which ſhe awaked more compoſed than we had almoſt dared to hope, and wholly occupied with the delightful idea of enjoying the bleſſing to which ſhe had imagined herſelf for ever loſt, of parental affection. I muſt here conclude for the preſent; the recollection of a ſcene ſo affecting, is, even yet, too much for me to dwell on longer at this time. You ſhall hear more in a day or two.

I am ever your

BEATRICE AUBIGNY.

LETTER

LETTER LIV.

THE SAME

TO

THE SAME.

Spa.

THE phyſician (Dr. [illegible].) ſent for by *Mrs. Foreſt*, on the alarm given by *Mr. Pemberton's* fainting, proved not an uſeleſs aid. — By his ſkill, and yet more by his ſoothing manners, chearful converſation, and very great attention, he has probably preſerved him from the threatened attacks of a dangerous fever. After ſome days of indiſpoſition, during which he has been conſtantly attended by his affectionate and apprehenſive *Lavinia*; he is now able to rejoin our party, and, though his happineſs ~~of~~ ſeeing unlooked, unhoped for, reſtored to him a child whom

he had not thought in being, is mixed with recollections of a painful nature; he is no longer without ſome proſpect of comfort in a world which has been to him, for ſo many years, an abode of miſery; a deſert, void of hope, and where the conſolation of friendſhip alone, could have reſcued him from deſpair. — He has heard, with at leaſt as great a degree of compoſure as could be hoped for, from *Lady Campbell*, the hiſtory of her meeting with his beloved and lamented *Clara*, with its ſubſequent occurrences, and conſequences. He has, however, the only conſolation that is poſſible to him, as to the unhappy object of his firſt, his only attachment, the ſatisfaction to know that ſhe breathed her laſt ſigh on the boſom of ſympathizing, and tender friendſhip; and that her eyes were cloſed by the gentle hand of her, whoſe love ſurvived the grave, and who became the mother of her orphan.—*Mr. Pemberton*, who has been, from the firſt, the confident of the young *D'Albiac*, as to his paſſion for *Lavinia*, and who already loves

loves him as his ſon; has declared that, however his affection for, and knowledge of the heart of his ward, may diſpoſe him to wiſh that he may make himſelf an intereſt in her heart; he will never uſe, even perſuaſion with her, either in his, or in any other man's favour; but that ſhe ſhall be the ſole miſtreſs of herſelf, as of all which he poſſeſſes, which will make her no inconſiderable fortune; and this will be, no doubt, augmented by *Lady Campbell* at her deceaſe. You will eaſily judge how much pleaſure we muſt have all received from a diſcovery ſo fortunate for the amiable *Sedley*; or, as rather is henceforth to be ſtiled, (till a third change ſhall take place, *Pemberton*;) which change, I have very little doubt, will, ere long, happen in favour of the deſerving and accompliſhed *D'Albiac*; the known hope of her father, and the merits, agreements, and aſſiduities of the young lover of himſelf, will, I foreſee, ſoon enable her to conſent, without reluctance, to his happineſs.—The moſt fond and affectionate of

fathers, being impatient to ſhew *Lavinia* the ſeat which ſhe will one day call her own, will leave, with her, this place in a few days, attended by *Lady Campbell*, and the adoring *D'Albiac*. I ſhall remain here, with the *Foreſt's*, to await the arrival of *Lord Aubigny*: And now, my dear *Henrietta*, I leave you to the peruſal of the very intereſting and affecting narrative, which you will find encloſed. (It is the ſame given, ſome time ſince, by *Mr. P*—— to *Sir Edward*.) You will, after having read it, be able to judge, by your own feelings, how truly affected we have been by the ſtory of the dear, ill-fated *Montauban*; (the ſequel of his *Clara's* fate, as related by *Lady C*——, you ſhall have in my next.) And ſuch are then the dreadful conſequences of that practice of the world, which leads us to conſider intereſt, not affection, as the proper baſis of an union, which death only *ſhould* diſſolve. Alas! beauteous *Montauban*—many a victim to the ſame ſordid motive ſhall follow thy hapleſs ſhade. Ah! *Henrietta*, you were

too

too much in the right; a marriage of affection is alone the marriage of happineſs, the guard of virtue, and the pledge of peace. But, ah! too—too late am I convinced of the truth of the aſſertion!

BEATRICE AUBIGNY.

LETTER LV.

THE SAME

TO

THE SAME.

Spa.

WHEN *Miſs Montauban* abandoned the lover ſhe adored, rather than, by her longer ſtay with him, render him obnoxious to the reſentment of a father, on whom he was chiefly dependent, ſhe determined on ſeeking an aſylum in *France*, where ſhe might, without difficulty, paſs

for a widow (but lately deprived of her huſband) until ſhe ſhould be delivered of the child of which ſhe was then pregnant, and that her recovery ſhould enable her to put in practice her reſolve of taking the veil in the convent of *La* ———, which, by placing an inſuperable barrier between them, ſhe flattered herſelf, would, in time, reconcile her fond and deſerted *Pemberton* to her loſs, and engage him to fulfil the wiſhes of his father. As ſoon as ſhe ſhould have taken the irrevocable vow, which muſt preclude his every future hope; her infant, if it ſurvived, was to have been conveyed by her faithful ſervant to *England*, there to be reſigned to the protection of a father, whom ſhe well knew would cheriſh, with the moſt ardent affection, this pledge of his *Clara's* love.

Lady Campbell was at this time going to her houſe at *Paris*, there to meet her relation the *Marchioneſs of Laurentia*, who had left her family at *Languedoc* (by the advice of her phyſician) the air of which diſagreed

diſagreed with her. — The providential deſign of pitying heaven ordained, that they ſhould be paſſengers in the ſame ſhip; a ſevere ſtorm, which aroſe within an hour after they had ſailed, from which they were for ſome time in the moſt imminent danger, ſo affected the poor *Hannah*, who had never before been at ſea, that ſhe died in conſequence of the violent and continued ſickneſs which it occaſioned her, before they reached *Calais*; which, after being driven by contrary winds, for ſeveral days, they at laſt effected in ſafety. — The extreme melancholy of the young and lovely widow, (for ſuch ſhe appeared to *Lady Campbell*) joined to an intereſt ſomething in her face and manners, attracted, in the firſt moment of their meeting, the attention, and compaſſionate ſympathy of this beſt of women; her grief, and deſpair at the loſs of her attendant, and only companion, ſtill encreaſed the tender concern ſhe had before felt for her: She uſed every effort to conſole the truly wretched *Montauban*, who now paſſed under the feined

name of *Sedley*. — She offered her her friendſhip: Be comforted, ſaid ſhe to her, as ſhe hung over the lifeleſs corpſe of the unfortunate girl, lamenting, in terms of the most plaintive agony, the premature fate of her faithful ſervant, and her own forlorn and miſerable ſituation, bereft of every comfort, every hope, without one friend to counſel, or aſſiſt her!—Be comforted, my deareſt madam, ſaid *Lady Campbell*; nor think that you are here without a friend to conſole, and to ſympathize with you in your misfortunes. — Whatever are their nature, believe me, nothing that is within my power ſhall be wanting to alleviate them, at leaſt.—From the firſt moment I beheld you dejected, and melancholy, for which, indeed, ~~too well~~ too well your appearance, and your dreſs but accounted; you made yourſelf an intereſt in my heart; I was ſure that you were unhappy: I was perſuaded that you were amiable, and I wiſhed to be of ſervice to you, to offer you my friendſhip, and to entreat the return of yours. The good, diſtreſt, lay inſtant claim

to

to the tenderneſs of the feeling mind; nor needs there length of time to recommend to each other, hearts, which ſorrow on the one ſide, and ſympathy on the other, cannot fail to unite.—I will not leave you, purſued ſhe, tenderly preſſing her hand; be aſſured I will not, till I have ſeen you ſafe in the protection of thoſe friends to whom, doubtleſs, you are going; nor then ſhall I conſent to loſe you. We muſt ſee each other often: I already promiſe myſelf the ſincereſt pleaſure from the friendſhip that, I hope, may bear date, from this moment, to the period of our lives. The weeping *Montauban*, who had ſat ſobbing, and hiding her face with her handkerchief, during the time that *Lady Campbell* had been ſpeaking, now, in a ſudden emotion, with which ſhe was equally ſurpriſed and affected, threw herſelf on her knees:—Merciful God! I thank thee, cried ſhe, in broken accents, thou lookeſt with an eye of pity on my ſufferings, and haſt ſent thy angel to reſcue me from the dreadful guilt of actual deſpair. My unhappy

infant will find a protectreſs, and I ſhall die content.—But O, madam! continued ſhe, embracing her knees, you know not to what an outcaſt, to what a literally deſerted wretch, you have offered the honour of your friendſhip! Alas! I have no friends whom I am ſeeking: I come to ſearch, amongſt ſtrangers, for an aſylum to my griefs; and, in a very ſhort time, I truſt, either to find a peaceful manſion in the grave, or, if that is denied me, to weep out the remaining moments of my life in one of thoſe friendly retreats which religion offers to the miſeries of the unprotected, and friendleſs! — Of this laſt propoſition we will talk hereafter, ſaid *Lady Campbell*, raiſing and kiſſing her; in the mean time remember, I requeſt you, as a proof that you do not reject the offer of my friendſhip, no more to uſe the expreſſions of *unfriended*, or *unprotected*. Think that in me, you ſee a mother, earneſtly ſolicitous for the welfare of her child. — With me you ſhall find an aſylum, at leaſt, till your recovery from an event which may,

may, probably, be at no very great distance: I insist on it. It will be then time enough to consult upon what mode of life you shall judge most consonant to your feelings, and inclination; and best calculated to secure you the most permanent felicity. ~~*Miss Montauban*, for some time, answered only by her tears.~~ — I ask not, at present, the history of a life, so early blighted by misfortune's blast: I will endeavour to deserve, before I ask, your confidence. At length, ~~replied she~~, Ah, madam! how hard is my fate, which must oblige me to seem ungrateful, and insensible to a goodness so generous, and so exalted; but, believe me, madam, pursued she, seeing the surprise of *Lady Campbell* in her looks, my heart is incapable of ingratitude; that it wants not sensibility is, alas! more my misery, than my boast. How charming, how soothing, how delightful, were the thought of accepting the asylum you have so generously offered me! Under *your* roof—honoured in *your* friendship, and blessed in *your* society, and counsel, could

I longer deem myſelf unhappy; or could my heart find room for any other ſentiments than thoſe of gratitude, and love, poured daily forth in ſilent praiſe, and humble thankfulneſs to Heaven, and you! But this my unhappy deſtiny forbids. — I dare not accept the diſtinction with which you would honour me; for, alas! I am unworthy of it.

Lady Campbell, yet more and more aſtoniſhed, was now going to ſpeak, but *Miſs Montauban* thus prevented her: I ſee, madam, continued ſhe, the ſurpriſe, and concern with which I inſpire you.—You are unwilling to believe that I *ought* not to receive the maternal protection you ſo affectingly offer me. — I ſhall lodge ſecurely this night in a reputable and worthy family, to which I have been recommended by a friend in *England*. — To-morrow, if your goodneſs will permit me, I will do myſelf the honour to explain to your ladyſhip the reaſons which oblige me to decline the happineſs which a generoſity

roſity and goodneſs, unequalled, have prompted you to offer me.—Alas! you will be but too well convinced that I merit your compaſſion; but you muſt know likewiſe, that, not entitled to your eſteem, I dare not aſpire to the honour of a friendſhip which would confer diſtinction on the moſt deſerving."—My heart, *Henrietta*, is ſo oppreſſed, as I recall thus to memory *Lady Campbell's* affecting recital, that its concluſion muſt be given in another letter.

BEATRICE AUBIGNY.

LETTER

LETTER LVI.

THE SAME

TO

THE SAME.

Spa.

LADY *Campbell* having herſelf conducted the fair mourner to her lodgings, where, notwithſtanding what had paſſed, ſhe could not leave her without reluctance, paſſed an almoſt ſleepleſs night in reſtleſs impatience, and various conjectures, ſhe was juſt riſen when a ſervant brought her a letter; ſhe opened, and ſoon diſcovered it to be from the unfortunate who engroſſed all her thoughts. The contents were as follow: ——

MISS MONTAUBAN,

TO

LADY CAMPBELL.

(Incloſed in the foregoing.)

OPPRESSED, deareſt, and moſt honoured madam, by your goodneſs, and with the humiliating ſenſe of my own unworthineſs; I ſit down to the painful taſk of ſhewing you to how undeſerving a creature your unſuſpicious generoſity and compaſſionate heart, impelled you to offer your friendſhip, your protection, your maternal tenderneſs. O, madam! how ſhall I have the courage to declare to you the fatal truths, which, however, I dare not attempt to conceal from you! How will your virtue ſhrink back from the idea of profered friendſhip to a guilty wretch, who, forgetting what was due to honour, to herſelf, and to her ſex, fell from the dignity of conſcious virtue, and unerring rectitude, the frail victim of

a love unſanctioned by the laws of Heaven, and of man. In me, madam, you have beheld no widow cheriſhing a virtuous and tender ſorrow for the memory of him to whom, in the ſight of approving Heaven, ſhe pledged her faith at the hallowed altar; and who, in the midſt of affliction, feels the conſoling thought that her woes are inflicted by the immediate hand of that Being, who will not fail to comfort and ſuſtain the innocent ſufferer, and not that they are the merited, and ſure conſequences of guilt, and of diſhonour. — Loſt to virtue, I was not ſo, however, to the ſenſe of ſhame, ~~and~~ of ~~no~~ principle, or natural affection. The kind relatives (for I loſt my parents in my infancy) whom I abandoned for the dear betrayer of my peace, and of his own; ah! ſtill too, too fondly loved! (forgive the involuntary acknowledgement) ſurvived not long the diſhonour which I had brought on them. Their deaths ~~oppreſſed me with grief~~, which I had but too much cauſe to accuſe myſelf of having accelerated, approached me with which rendered

dered life a miſery, even with the man whom I adored, and whoſe kindneſs was unabated; every moment paſſed in endeavours to ſecure me that happineſs, which is to be found alone in the paths of virtue, and the pride of innocence.—At length I beheld him on the point of breaking with a father who tenderly loved him, and on whom he almoſt ſolely depended, in conſequence of his having urged him to a marriage with a lady of rank, merit and fortune; and took the only ſtep in my power to reſtore, to himſelf, the man I loved: I withdrew myſelf for ever from all that my ſoul held dear, leaving a letter, which explained to him the motives of my flight, and entreating his compliance with the commands of his father. One faithful ſervant only was my attendant, was the promiſed companion of my exile; you have witneſſed her fate, and my unavailing regrets.—And now, madam, dare I, nor incur the imputation of a preſumption, which it would be infinitely painful to me to know your thoughts accuſed me

of?

of? — Dare I to appeal to your goodneſs, your humanity, on the behalf of the helpleſs infant that may ſoon enter this world of ſin and miſery? If I ſurvive not its birth (and I feel a ſtrong preſentiment that I ſhall not) will you deign to protect the helpleſs innocent, who muſt, without your generous interpoſition, be abandoned (if it ſhould live) to all the miſeries of want; perhaps, be hereafter expoſed to all the temptations of vice, nor meet a guiding hand to lead it from the paths of guilt, to thoſe of virtue and religion? For myſelf I have nothing to aſk, nothing to hope, but that you will not deteſt my memory, tho' you muſt abhor my crime; but virtue, exalted as your ladyſhip's, is never ſevere to the contrite, and repentant offender; my ſoul repoſes itſelf on the ſenſibility and goodneſs of a heart open to the tendereſt impreſſions of humanity; guilty as I have been, you will not refuſe a ſigh to my misfortunes, or withhold that protection ~~with hold~~ from an innocent orphan, which you ſo condeſcendedly offered

to

to its ill-fated parent. If the ſad preſage of my mind ſhould not be fulfiled, and it ſhould pleaſe Heaven farther to lengthen a wretched exiſtence, it is my fixed determination to embrace the veil, and reſign for ever all commerce with the world: And now, madam, what remains? but that I entreat your pardon for this long intruſion on your time; that I offer to you the warmeſt acknowledgements of a truly grateful heart, for your tranſcendent goodneſs; and aſſure you, that in my daily prayers to Heaven, that my ſufferings and penitence may be accepted before him, who will not be "*extreme to mark what is done amiſs*" in his penitent creatures; I ſhall never ceaſe to implore its bleſſing on her, who, in the hour of agonizing affliction, ſpoke comfort to my troubled heart, when ſinking in deſpair, and loſt to every hope of conſolation.—Forgive that I ſign no name to this melancholy epiſtle;—never more will I write the name of the family which my conduct has diſgraced. — That of *Sedley* is fictitious

fictitious: With *you*, madam, I ſhould abhor the leaſt deviation from truth.—I can incur no danger of that kind, in ſubſcribing myſelf your *Ladyſhip's* unworthy, but moſt obliged, moſt grateful, and moſt reſpectful humble ſervant.

You, who know *Lady Campbell*, will eaſily imagine what were her feelings on peruſing this affecting epiſtle.—She would have flown inſtantly to the amiable ſufferer; but this billet, which ſhe had found at her houſe the evening before, from the *Marchioneſs*, her niece, who earneſtly requeſted her to meet her that day ſome leagues from *Paris*, would not permit; ſhe contented herſelf, therefore, for the preſent, with the thought that ſhe ſhould ſoon return; when ſhe would employ every aſſiduity to reſtore tranquillity to a breaſt ſo deſerving of compaſſion and eſteem, and inſtantly diſpatched to her the following billet. ———

Nothing

Nothing but an indiſpenſible neceſſity to meet the *Marchioneſs of Laurentia* (who is much indiſpoſed) this day, ſome diſtance from *Paris*, could have prevented me from flying to give every conſolatary aſſurance in my power, to my dear and amiable friend.—Afflict not yourſelf, my deareſt child, with ideas ſo full of horror and humiliation.—Doubtleſs, the merciful Ruler of the univerſe has ſeen your tears, has accepted your repentance; for when found not the returning penitent acceptance with the God of all goodneſs! and ſhall erring mortals preſume to hold as guilty, whom Omnipotence has abſolved? The noble ſacrifice you have made, renders you every way worthy of the friendſhip which I here pledge to you with a faith inviolable. Yes, my dear ſufferer, were I to ſuſtain the cruel affliction of loſing you, as your melancholy inclines you to preſage; you have my moſt ſacred promiſe, that I will be a mother to your child.—I will watch over it with a truly maternal care, and

neglect

neglect nothing that may have a tendency to promote alike its temporal and eternal felicity; but this I am perſuaded is but the natural conſequence of a mind ill at eaſe. Raiſe then your thoughts to better hopes my beloved friend;—all that the tender attentions of ſympathizing affection can do towards effacing the memory of your ſorrows I aſſure you of.—At my return, which will be within three days at fartheſt, I ſhall inſiſt on your taking up your abode with me; you ſhall weep in my boſom, there repoſe your confidence and your cares; and I will mingle my tears with your's, and your griefs ſhall be leſſened, by being divided.—Exert your fortitude then my dear, keep up your ſpirits, I charge you, during my ſhort abſence; and it ſhall be my concern to conſider what may beſt reſtore and ſupport them, when we meet again; in the mean time, if I have any part in your eſteem, they will find relief in the aſſurance that you

you have the moſt zealous and affectionate of friends in

MATILDA CAMPBELL.

Lady Campbell returned as ſhe had expected, in about three days, but what was her affliction to learn that three different meſſengers had been that very day at her houſe, to enquire if ſhe was in *Paris*. *Mrs. Sedley*, they had ſaid, was thought to be dying; and anxiouſly wiſhed to ſee her *Ladyſhip*. Shocked beyond expreſſion at this intelligence, ſhe flew to the expiring *Montauban*, who had been taken ill, in the night of the very day on which *Lady Campbell* left *Paris*; and was in a few hours afterwards delivered of *Lavinia*: There had appeared no ſymptoms of danger till this morning, when a ſlight fever, ~~enfued,~~ of which ſhe had complained during the night, encreaſed ſo rapidly, and with appearances ſo alarming, that the phyſicians who attended, had evidently little hopes of

of her life.—As to herſelf, ſhe ſeemed, from the firſt moments of her growing worſe, to be aſſured that ſhe had not many hours to live; and begged they would ſend to know, whether *Lady Campbell* was returned: ſoon after this ſhe grew delirious, with intervals however of ſenſe; in one of which ſhe began a letter to her *Ladyſhip*; but could only write a very few lines, and theſe ſcarcely intelligible.

When this dear friend arrived, ſhe was again convaleſcent; but, after ſome minutes, her ſenſes returned, a faint gleam of pleaſure brightened on her palid countenance, when ſhe perceived *her* whom ſhe had ſo ardently wiſhed to ſee, ſitting by her bedſide. She held out her hand, which *Lady Campbell* preſſed to her lips, and reaching from behind her pillow a ſmall caſket, ſhe gave it into her hand, together with the letter ſhe had began to write; then making ſigns to the weeping attendants, that they ſhould bring to her her infant; after tenderly embracing

bracing it, and ſeeming in a ſilent ejaculation (for ſhe had been ſometime ſpeechleſs) to implore the bleſſing of Heaven on its helpleſs innocence, ſhe reſigned it to the arms of the deeply affected *Lady Campbell*, and expired without a ſigh.

I can write no more, *Henrietta!* nor could you, I dare believe, proceed with the peruſal if I could; I am half blind with weeping, and feel as if I ſhould never recover the ſpirits of which this melancholy narration has ſo totally deprived me.

BEATRICE AUBIGNY.

LETTER LVII.

THE SAME

TO

THE SAME,

IN CONTINUATION.

Spa.

FROM the fatal moment which terminated the woes of the beauteous and ſuffering *Montauban* (this lovely victim of at once a heart too tender, and a mind, perhaps, too highly exalted) *Lady Campbell* has religiouſly, and zealouſly fulfiled her promiſes of protection, and maternal tenderneſs towards the little innocent.—Having loſt ſome years before an infant daughter of the name of *Lavinia*, ſhe herſelf gave the ſame to the adopted child of her affection;—for ſhe was ignorant of that of her mother.—Family conſiderations, of which indeed, for ſome years, the deplorable ſtate of the *Marchioneſs of Laurentia*,

Laurentia, was I believe the chief, has ~~kept~~ kept her almoſt ever ſince that period, in *Italy*, and *France* (one ſhort viſit to *England* excepted) until her late return.—The words of the billet which accompanied the caſket, as far as were legible, were as follows,—but with many breaks, having been written at ſeveral times.

"It is in vain, O beſt and moſt exalted of women! your compaſſionate ſolicitude for a life, which Heaven even in this inſtant demands; the hand of *death* is upon me.— *my ſweet infant!*—but you will preſerve its helpleſs innocence, and I die content.—The caſket which I have deſired ſhould be put into your hands, contains the portraits of her ill-fated parents—Alas! they are all I have to bequeath her.—O my beſt, my honoured Friend!—Farther ſhall I dare to breathe one *darling wiſh*—*one* more requeſt may I preſume to make—O if,"———What followed my dear *Henrietta*, was utterly illegible; and this circumſtance you will readily imagine, was a

cruel aggravation of the grief of *Lady Campbell*, before but too poignant.

And now having concluded my melancholy tale, let me aſk you, *Henrietta*, Do you never intend me the favour of another letter?—you are deeply in my debt; how have I merited this negligence? not one line, in return for all the intereſting intelligence which I have communicated to you. If I do not receive a ſpeedy reply to this, I ſhall begin to ſuſpect I am no longer a welcome correſpondent, and reſent accordingly. *Lady Campbell*, *Mr.* and *Miſs Pemberton*, with *D'Albiac* have left the *Spa*; and moſt unfortunately *Mr.* and *Mrs. Foreſt*, ſince *their* departure, have been likewiſe called away, by the ſudden and dangerous indiſpoſition of *Sir William*. The *P*—— and *M*—— families are however luckily here; or I ſhould feel very aukwardly from the deſertion of my party, being as I am in a manner, *obliged* to wait here the arrival of his *Lordſhip*, who by this time is moſt probably on his journey; as

it

it is, I cannot but be very ſenſible of their loſs.—Do you always ſay kind things, on my part, to *Sir Charles?* who I ſhall be inclined to think, has more friendſhip for me, than has *ſomebody elſe*, if ſhe does not very ſoon take notice of her neglected

BEATRICE AUBIGNY.

LETTER LVIII.

LADY SEYMOUR,

TO

LADY AUBIGNY.

Morton-Hall.

NEARLY overwhelmed with the affliction of ſeeing the daily declining health of my ſecond *parent*, my ever dear *Mrs. Morton*, and being much indiſpoſed in my own health; am I yet doomed to be farther diſtreſſed, by

beholding the long-loved friend, and ſiſter of my heart, haſtening with thoughtleſs rapidity, to inevitable and aſſured deſtruction? The *Foreſt's*, as well as *Lady Campbell*, and *Lavinia*, have left you.—Does then,—I tremble to aſk it;—does *Sir Edward Meadows* remain the ſole protector of *Lady Aubigny?* does ſhe voluntarily, and without regret, give up all pretenſion to character, to delicacy, to the reſpect and eſteem of the right judging part of the world; and content herſelf to aſſociate with thoſe only, whom the eſtimable part of her ſex, whilſt they pity, avoid? ſuch alone, will countenance a conduct ſo openly imprudent, to ſpeak in the mildeſt terms. But it cannot be, and I alarm myſelf in vain; perhaps raiſe the bluſh of indignation on your cheek, that I ſhould dare, even for a moment, to think you thus loſt to every ſenſe of *decorum*, and *propriety*. In this caſe, my dear *Beatrice*, forgive the injurious thought.—You do not ſpeak indeed of his having returned with *Mr.* and *Mrs. Foreſt*; but this I will believe has been,

the

~~the caſe,~~ but becauſe you could not think it neceſſary to tell me ſo, when you inform me that *you* remained; my anxiety however will be extreme, till I again hear from you.—If it does you injuſtice, you will nevertheleſs know it to have proceeded from the ſource of apprehenſive affection, trembling alive to all that relates to your *fame*, your *peace*, and your eternal *felicity*. How have I wept over the ſorrows of the unhappy *Montauban!* how ſympathized with, the equally, unfortunate *Pemberton*, doomed to linger through a tedious exiſtence, in agonizing remorſe. May the *God* of *mercy* pour the balm of comfort into his bleeding boſom; and, after ſo many years of ſuffering, give him to cloſe his days in peace, in the ſociety of his late found child, his amiable, and lovely *Lavinia*. O, my beloved friend! if ſuch are the fatal, but certain conſequences of a deviation from the paths of rectitude; if, with ſo many virtues ſtill left to the beauteous penitent,—the juſtice of offended omnipotence required the atonement of a

premature and mournful death; who ſhall not tremble at the thought of incurring the divine diſpleaſure, by wilful diſobedience to its juſt commands? Is there, my dear *Beatrice*,' *can* there be a heart ſo irrationally repulſive of right impreſſions; which having melted in compaſſionate ſorrow, over the ſad ſtory we have heard, can delay a moment, to renounce the thorny road of error, and to return with grateful alacrity to that virtue, "*whoſe ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all whoſe paths are peace?*

Adieu, my friend;

Suffer me to remain your's with equal eſteem and affection,

HENRIETTA SEYMOUR.

LETTER

LETTER LIX.

LADY AUBIGNY,

TO

LADY SEYMOUR,

(Before the receipt of the preceding.)

Spa.

ALTHOUGH *Lord Aubigny* had faithfully promiſed to meet me at the *Spa*; although I wrote to him, acquainting him with the departure of *Lady Campbell*, *Lavinia*, and afterwards of the *Foreſt's*, and that I waited here expreſsly to receive him; he has thought proper to retract from his engagement, and has ſatisfied himſelf with ~~coolly~~ *mirely*, acquainting me that he has altered his intention, and that he expects my immediate return, for the purpoſe of accompanying him to *Weſtbury*; having, he ſays, engaged for my paſſing ſome part, if not the whole remainder of

the ſummer with my *uncle* and *aunt*; (extremely obliging this!) but his *Lordſhip* muſt permit *me*, however negligent he may chuſe to be of his own engagements, to judge for myſelf in reſpect to mine.—I ſhall ſcarcely condeſcend to return to my leading ſtrings, and with ſilent ſubmiſſion attend to the orders given for my going to this place, and returning from the other, as his caprices may be pleaſed to direct.

As I have every reaſon to believe that my ſociety is a matter of indifference to him, I cannot but reſent his deſiring to draw me from this place, for no other reaſon than that I do not wiſh to leave it; and that the life I lead here, is more conſonant to my ideas of *living*, than the melancholy exiſtence offered me at *Weſtbury Park*, of which I was ſufficiently tired long ſince, or—but no matter—I ſhall remain here whilſt I find it moſt agreeable ſo to do; and if his *Lordſhip* has no more preſſing engagement to plead for the retracting his promiſe to me, than that of a viſit to the

the nevertheleſs *dear* old folks at *Weſtbury*, a place, which is I am ſure, no more to his taſte than it ever was to mine; I think his politeneſs ill juſtified in ſo poor an excuſe, and myſelf ſufficiently ſo, in refuſing obedience to ſo unwelcome a ſummons. I do not feel myſelf in a frame of mind fit for the lengthening of this epiſtle, nor ſhould I have written again, ſo obſtinately ſilent as you are pleaſed to remain, but that the long uſage in which I have been of ſharing with you my joys and diſquiets, have obliged me to this communication of the ſentiments of your ill-ſatisfied, and ill-treated

BEATRICE.

LETTER LX.

LORD AUBIGNY,

TO

COLONEL EGREMONT.

YOU may ſpare your wiſe ſpeeches, and your tedious arguments, *Egermont*; the *Weſtbury's* have ſo confoundedly teized me with entreaties, that I would fulfil my promiſe of bringing the *Counteſs* to viſit them, that I *have* written to deſire *her return* for that purpoſe; I did once intend going myſelf to *the Spa*, and I had promiſed her *Ladyſhip* that I would, but *Antonia* would not part from me: She was actually in agonies whenever I but hinted at ſuch a deſign. She was ſure, ſhe ſaid, that I meant to deſert her; my ~~affection~~ for *Beatrice* would revive, and ſhe ſhould never ſurvive the loſs of my affection; I will own to you that I could not bear her tears, or reſiſt her entreaties; and therefore,

therefore, gave up the thought; but what will you ſay for your favourite now? her party are all returned, with the ſingle exception of *Sir Edward*; her pretence is, that ſhe waits there for my arrival, without conſidering, that if I was not the civileſt of huſbands, I ſhould indubitably cut the throat of her favourite the inſtant I arrived. I ſhall however content myſelf with the revenge of fixing her at *Weſtbury*, for the remainder of the ſummer. Methinks it would hurt my pride, (perhaps a remaining ſpark of affection lurks amongſt it,) to have it publickly known that ſhe prefers another. However it be, ſhe ſhall remain no longer with him. I have determined it—have told her ſo—and ſhall expect to be obeyed.

AUBIGNY.

LETTER

LETTER LXI.

MRS. FOREST,

TO

LADY AUBIGNY.

Willbury.

WILL you my deareſt *Lady Aubigny*, forgive the zeal of ſiſterly affection, of a friendſhip ardent and undiſſembled.—May I tell you, my loved friend, that, already, the voice of cenſure begins to ſpeak of my *Beatrice*, as highly imprudent, in remaining thus long at the *Spa*, with no other companion than a young man, who, they cannot but ſuppoſe, is more ſolicitouſly attentive to her, than, as a married woman, ſhe ought to ſuffer him to be.

You will remember, my dear *Lady Aubigny*, that, whilſt yet with you, I repreſented to you all this, and was earneſt with you to return with us to *England*, ſince that

that return was on our part unavoidable; you have withſtood all my entreaties.—You thought yourſelf obliged to wait the expected arrival of his *Lordſhip*; my next earneſt requeſt to you was, that you would join ſome other party, in which your conduct might be ſcreened from imputation, and to my brother that he would return with us to *England*; my arguments to both were urged equally in vain.—With what reluctance I quitted you, you could not but be ſenſible; indeed I but too plainly foreſaw what would be the inevitable conſequences of this fatal error?—The diſcontent of *Lord Aubigny*, and the general cenſure.—You have no longer the plea of waiting for his *Lordſhip*; I underſtand that he has demanded your return; it may not be yet too late to recover the confidence of *Lord Aubigny*, and the eſteem of all who know you.—But if you longer delay,—my dear ~~friend,~~ *Beatrice*, I dare not deceive you, you muſt reſign every future hope of domeſtic felicity, and of unblemiſhed fame—O my ſweet friend, let me entreat you, in

the

the name of all whom you ſhould moſt love, to conſider what is due to yourſelf, to your friends, and to that rank in life of which you were formed to be the ornament, and the pride;—ſuffer not, I beſeech you, my imprudent brother to be the companion of your journey. Hitherto all may be well,—one ſtep farther in imprudence, (pardon me the word) may be productive of conſequences which will render wiſhes fruitleſs, and regret unavailing. Be aſſured my dear *Beatrice*, that I am your truly affectionate, though, I own at preſent, unhappy,

C. FOREST.

LETTER

LETTER LXII.

LADY AUBIGNY,

TO

LADY SEYMOUR.

Spa.

O That I had long ſince liſtened to your perſuaſion, *Henrietta!* when you would have been indeed my friend,—and when it was not yet too late to have ſaved me from deſtruction;—when you painted the juſt, though high wrought picture of felicity, where duty according with inclination, made virtue, and happineſs the ſame,—with one man on earth ſuch had been *my* life, an even tenor of rational, of domeſtic joy, of virtuous love, and mutual affection. He would have taught me to deſpiſe the allurements of the world, and to have ſought my happineſs in innocent amuſements, and every laudable purſuit.

But

But with *Lord Aubigny!* domeſtic felicity with *Aubigny!* how wild a thought! How, meeting from the motives which united us, could ſuch a ſyſtem have been eſtabliſhed?—Young, inconſiderate and admired, my heart panted with ambitious hopes; tired of the inſipid fameneſs of an antiquated dwelling, and of the ſociety of its ruſticated, though amiable inhabitants; unacquainted with the tenderneſſes of love; of a temper naturally diſpoſed to gaiety, and pleaſure, and alive to every ſenſation which uſually takes poſſeſſion of that mind, in which adulation and flattery deſtroy every more ſerious idea. I accepted the offered hand of *Aubigny*; nor ſaw, till too late, the poſſibility that an event, which was the ſubject of envy to my companions, of gratulation to my friends, and of ſelf-exultation, could terminate in aught but felicity. As to his Lordſhip, he miſtook a tranſient paſſion for real affection, and ſacrificed to that the pride of rank and encreaſe of fortune; he thought me handſome, and beauty is his paſſion, but variety

riety not leſs ſo;—perſonal charms were alone his object, the mind he had never conſidered as an ingredient worthy his conſideration; poſſeſſion therefore was ſoon followed by indifference, but the world (and *Lord Aubigny* is of the number of its moſt devoted votaries) was pleaſed to allow me beauty, it aſcribed to me eaſe, elegance and faſhion; my vivacity, and love of pleaſure, made me every where well received; I was flattered, followed, and admired. His *Lordſhip's* vanity, and my own, were equally gratified;—and as he conſidered himſelf at liberty to purſue his inclinations, I never interfered in his pleaſures, or teized him with complaints of his infidelity, or indifference,—the latter degenerated not into hatred; in return, he left me the entire miſtreſs of my time, my engagements, and my conduct;—I believe he did not think he had reaſon to doubt my virtue, and as to my affection, he had never been very ſolicitous to enſure it.—We have lived therefore eaſily, if not happily together;—nor till this recent affront, have

have I had occaſion to reproach him with the ſmalleſt breach of politeneſs;—and to this I cannot, will not ſubmit—You know not, *Henrietta*, half the uncomfortable things which I have ~~now~~, at this time, to bear up with—or you could not have had the cruelty to write as you have done. *Mrs. Foreſt* has written too—and though very affectionately, and that I know ſhe loves me, yet I cannot be pleaſed altogether with ~~the~~ her ſtile ~~of her letter.~~—*Sir Edward* has likewiſe received a letter from his mother, with which I ~~now~~ can perceive he is not very well ſatisfied, although he attempts to impoſe on me by a forced chearfulneſs;—he is beſides hurt, I know he is, by the unkind ſilence of *Mr. Pemberton*; and yet, in what is either *Sir Edward*, or I, in reality, to blame, in our ſtay here? Could I do otherwiſe than wait here the expected arrival of *Lord Aubigny?* or would it have been conſiſtent with ~~our~~ common civility for *Sir Edward* to have left the place till then; *Mr.* and *Mrs. Foreſt* having been obliged to return to *England?*—But the world

world is not pleaſed;—the world is never ſo; I am reſolved therefore to be guided by my own heart, and judgment; and to be no more the ſlave of its unlicenſed deſpotiſm; what are the joys it has to afford me, in return for the ſacrifices I ſhould make to its opinions and caprices. You *muſt* not, you *ſhall* not be angry with me, *Henrietta*. Perhaps, after all this boaſted reſolution, I may leave this place in a few days,—perhaps I may go to *Weſtbury*,—I may obey *Aubigny*. I know not yet what I *ſhall*, what I *can* do;—alas! I only know that I *cannot*, from whatever motive, give voluntary pain to the perſon on earth whom I moſt wiſh to oblige, by whom I am every moment *obliged*.—*Henrietta!* I am not the proper object of your ſeverity. I merit all your pity, and your prayers.

BEATRICE AUBIGNY.

I have this moment received letters from *Lady Campbell* and *Miſs Pemberton*, the latter writes in a ſtrain of much chearfulneſs;—the former ſpeaks with pleaſure of the complacency with which *Lavinia* ſeems to liſten to the perſuaſive tenderneſs of *D'Albiac*; I think I foreſee, what at the ſame time, amiable and accompliſhed as he is, I ſhould have thought a taſk of infinite difficulty; that he will be able (aſſiſted, perhaps by the deſire of gratifying the wiſhes of her *father* and *Lady Campbell*) to take place of *M*—— in her heart. But indeed, her beginning tenderneſs was never encouraged, by the hope of a return; in that caſe, ah, *Henrietta!* in that caſe, I *know* it had been impoſſible.—

LETTER

LETTER LXIII.

SIR EDWARD MEADOWS,

TO

MR. PEMBERTON.

Spa.

YOU renounce me then *Pemberton*, for *never* can I reſign the paſſion which has ſo long made a part of my exiſtence.—oh! *never* will I abandon the lovelieſt, the moſt beloved of women; and ſuch were the terms, as your parting words conveyed, on which alone I could preſerve your friendſhip. Suſpected, and inſulted by her huſband; ſlighted by pretended, and wounded by the ſeverity of even, perhaps, real friends; cenſured by an unfeeling world; is it for *me*; for *me*, the cauſe of all; for whom ſhe ſacrifices *fame*, *fortune*, *friends?* is it for *me*, I aſk, to fly her preſence? to leave her to combat the difficulties with which ſhe would have to ſtruggle;

ſtruggle; the ſorrows which prey already too deeply on her heart, and begin to injure a health infinitely more precious to me than my exiſtence; and of which I cannot ſee the interruption, without feeling fears that nearly diſtract me. If I forſake not this adored of my heart,— you have vowed to withdraw from me your correſpondence and friendſhip. My *mother* will abjure me; my *ſiſters* will forget they have a *brother*; be it ſo; I feel for *you*, *Pemberton*, all that friendſhip the moſt ardent, eſteem the moſt lively, can inſpire. I honour, I reverence my *mother*, with the utmoſt tenderneſs of filial affection; I love my *ſiſters*; but not *friendſhip*, nor *filial*, nor *fraternal* tenderneſs, much leſs the very inferior conſiderations of fame and fortune, have ſufficient power over my ſoul, to make me ſo loſt to honour, to gratitude, as to abandon the lovelieſt of her ſex, who for me, has ſacrificed whatever the world calls valuable. No, enchanting *Beatrice!* thy devoted *Meadows* ſolemnly ſwears to thee eternal

eternal love, attention, and eſteem. If the moſt anxious zeal to promote thy peace and felicity; if the moſt grateful and tender aſſiduity to pleaſe thee, to keep from thee with tendereſt care, whatever may tend to thy diſquiet, or cloud the ſunſhine of thy days, can make thee any compenſation for the ſacrifices thou haſt made for his ſake; *Meadows* ſhall not be found an ingrate.

Still, *Pemberton*, do I dare to cheriſh the hope, that your friendſhip for me, is not built on ſo ſhallow a foundation, as to be forfeited for one error; I could be very angry with you, for the ſeverity of your parting expreſſions, but a certain ſoftneſs hangs about my heart; at this moment, I feel myſelf weak as female tenderneſs, the tear is actually trembling in my eyes, and in this inſtant of dejection, the ſad *preſentiment*, which actually ſtruck like a *poignard* into my heart as your lips pronounced, the *for ever farewell*, with which you cruelly pierced my ſoul, at our ſeparation, re-

curs to my mind with additional force. Methinks it forboded,—I know not what—yet it ſeemed the preſage of our never meeting more.—But I will ſhake off this enervating weakneſs,—this *chimera* of the brain;—why ſhould we *not* meet again? be it as it may, however your leſs ſtedfaſt affection may ſhrink from the trying hour of leſſened fame, and general cenſure; I feel that my tender regard, my warmeſt friendſhip, will ever be invariably your's. In deſpight therefore of your unkindneſs, I ſubſcribe myſelf, what I muſt always remain, faithfully, affectionately, and unalterably,

Your's,

E. MEADOWS.

LETTER

LETTER LXIV.

MISS PEMBERTON,

TO

MISS RIVERS.

Oak-Hill.

WE are at length, my dear *Maria*, arrived at *Oak-Hill*, the ſeat of my dear father; – whoſe tenderneſs for me ſeems to encreaſe every hour, yet his melancholy, become ſo habitual that it ſeems as if aſſociated with his nature, (though I underſtand that in his happier days he was of a diſpoſition remarkably chearful) appears not to diminiſh in the degree we had hoped it would have done. I had indeed flattered myſelf that the ſoothing attentions of filial love, would in time teach him to loſe the remembrance of his ſorrows; — but alas! they are, I fear, too deeply engraven on his heart to be ſo obliterated; the reſemblance too which he thinks I bear

to my mother, while it renders me the dearer, makes me the more affecting, object to him.—When we arrived here, he claſped me in his arms; and in a tremulous voice ſaid—welcome my deareſt child! welcome to thy paternal home! Ah! had heaven permitted, thy angel mother too had bleſt the ſcene! but I deſerved her not.—Forgive me my ſweet *Lavinia*, added he, after a moment's pauſe, and wiping from his cheek the involuntary tear.—let me not cruelly ſadden thee thus unavailingly;—in thee I yet behold my *Clara*; juſt ſuch ſhe looked—all lovely, all-interreſting, all-attracting as youth, beauty, and goodneſs, can appear.—He turned from me to pay the complimentary welcome to *Lady Campbell*. I walked to a diſtant window for the purpoſe of indulging my tears, for a few moments. *Mr. D'Albiac*, ever attentive to my every word and action followed me; the tear was in his eye, the glow of compaſſionate tenderneſs animated his countenance. My dear *Miſs Pemberton*, ſaid he, and took my hand, theſe ſcenes are too tender for your extreme

ſenſibility

ſenſibility to ſuſtain. Forgive me; but I muſt not leave you to yourſelf;—you forget that you are miſtreſs here; will you not tell *Lady Campbell* that ſhe is a welcome gueſt, and will you deign to ſay that the happy *D'Albiac* is not an impertinent intruder, where you are intitled to receive, or reject thoſe who aſpire to the felicity of your ſociety, and friendſhip.—*Lady Campbell*, at this inſtant joined us; (my poor *father* had left the room) my deareſt *Lavinia*, ſaid ſhe, obſerving my tears, which flowed in deſpite of all my efforts to reſtrain them; do not give way too much to theſe emotions, your *father* will ſoon, again ceaſe himſelf to feel them in the ſame degree;—and you will, in a ſhort time, ſee them ſubſide into a peaceful calm;—your duteous love, and tender attentions, will yet gild the evening of his days.—I would have ſpoken—but my heart was too full—I could only preſs her hand to my lips.—I have been pointing out to your *Lavinia*, madam, ſaid the obliging *D'Albiac*, an omiſſion of which ſhe had been guilty; could you have believed that *Miſs Pemberton* knew how to

err? yet ſhe forgot to expreſs her pleaſure at finding you her gueſt; and is not, I dare ſay, at all delighted that you have accompanied her. She ſmiled, and ſaid, *Lavinia* will not plead guilty to this accuſation I believe. My father now re-entered, with a look of more chearfulneſs than I had yet ſeen him; I fear indeed it was partly aſſumed.—However, we all paſſed, I believe, a not undelightful evening.—Had, indeed, my father's mind been equally capable of taſting happineſs, I ſhould have felt myſelf the moſt enviable of human beings.

My beloved *Lady Campbell* is under much uneaſineſs, from having learnt that *Mr.* and *Mrs. Foreſt* left the *Spa* in a few days after us, in conſequence of an expreſs ſent to deſire their immediate return to *the Grove*, where *Sir William* is dangerouſly ill; and that the *Counteſs* ſtill remains there, without any female companion, or ſcarce any other viſitor than *Sir Edward*, who is her conſtant attendant. I have long, my dear *Maria*, ſeen the

the mutual partiality, which now threatens to be productive of ſome unhappy event. What pity is it, that with a heart ſo naturally good, an underſtanding ſo ſuperior, and a mind which poſſeſſes ſo many excellent qualities, this charming woman ſhould be guilty of ſuch imprudence, (to give it no harſher name.) I ſincerely wiſh that *Sir Edward* had yielded to the entreaties of my father, who earneſtly preſſed him to accompany us into *D—ſhire*.

I ſee your arch ſmile *Maria*, at this diſtance; I hear you ſay, ah! who doubts you! but as clever as you may ſuppoſe yourſelf, for once you are miſtaken, if you believe I wiſh ſo from any other motive than that of *his* happineſs, and *Lady Aubigny's*. I know that you cannot but have ſuſpected a certain friend of yours, to have been not inſenſible to the merits of this *all conquering Sir Edward*. In one of your letters you ſay, "the vivacity of your encomiums, ~~if~~ your impatience of the importunities of *Mr. Amyand*, ſo encreaſed from

the time of your viſiting the *Opera*, the ill-at-eaſe ſtate (to coin an expreſſion;" ſay you) in which you continued even after his departure," lead me to believe that you are not an iron-hearted damſel, although poor *Amyand* has not been ſo fortunate as to ſoften you in his favour." I know not if I diſtruſted myſelf, till I found that I was ſuſpected; I think not, or that I had communicated to you my ſuſpicions. I will own however, that upon ſearching into my heart for the ground of your accuſations, I did not quite like the ſituation of things in that wayward manſion; which I began to fear, had formed the treacherous deſign of deſerting to one who would have ſlighted the too forward fugitive, and whoſe own was already in the poſſeſſion of another. Pride, delicacy, feminine dignity, were all rouzed into action at the humiliating thought.—They drove out the invader, and left only friendſhip, eſteem, and pity for *his* hopeleſs *love*, in their place. Do not affect now to think that I deceive either you, or myſelf; I ſhall be very angry

if

if I am not believed. I ſtill think highly of *Sir Edward*; I ſtill wiſh the continuance of that brotherly regard, which he profeſſes for me; but had the woman of his heart a hand to diſpoſe of, I ſhould, I am ſure I ſhould, rejoice to ſee them united.—You expreſs yourſelf charmed with the character of *Mr. D'Albiac*, and intimate a wiſh that he may ſupplant, in my heart, the man who is unworthy of it.—Say not *unworthy* my dear *Maria*; the word was not made to be joined with the name with which you would aſſociate it—do not be cenſorious now again; you know he is my *brother*, and you would not allow me to ſpeak unjuſtly of *yours*.—I have candidly owned to you, that I think highly of *Mr. D'Albiac's* merits and accompliſhments;—the frankneſs of his manners, the delicacy, yet manlineſs of his ſentiments, are calculated to engage both eſteem and affection; and the partiality with which he honours me (of which it would be affectation to ſeem to doubt) his unremitting aſſiduities, and attentions, do not certainly render me leſs

ſenſible to the graces of his mind and perſon; yet I cannot at preſent think of engaging in any union; but juſt reſtored, ſo providentially reſtored, to a father, whom I knew not to have been now in exiſtence! fully bleſt as I am in the tenderneſs of paternal love, and the *maternal* parent ſtill, as ever, charmingly ſupplied to me; (in the I really believe equal affection of my for ever dear benefactreſs) why ſhould I be in haſte, to put a felicity ſo perfect to the hazard; (for with the very beſt of men is it not ſtill a hazard) and withdraw myſelf from the protection of the fondeſt of fathers, ere I have had leiſure to enjoy in its full extent the bliſs of my preſent ſtate. Or, ſuppoſing that my dear father ſhould remain with us, yet would not the duty due to an huſband, ſuperſede that which I ſhould owe even to the author of my being; My attentions, at the leaſt, muſt be divided; and do I not owe to the ſufferings of an unhappy parent my every care, the utmoſt ſolicitude of duteous affection; and ought not my life to

be

be dedicated to the delightful purpoſes of ſoothing the ſorrows of his heart; ~~and~~ of ſupplying to him, as far as I am able, by my aſſiduous love, and willing obedience, the loſs of her whom he can never ceaſe to lament, and for which indeed there can be no equivalent.—I am ſure you will think as I do on this ſubject; and I hope too that my dear parent will permit me to live free from engagements which muſt neceſſarily deprive me of the ſatisfaction of living alone to him. I cannot figure to myſelf a happineſs on earth, equal to that of the conſciouſneſs that by my duteous attention I leſſen a father's woes; and take ſomething from the gloom, which would otherwiſe continue to cloud the evening of his days. Perhaps to add ſome few hours to the life of him to whom I owe my own.

And keep a while one parent from the ſky.

POPE.

Adieu my dear friend;—I am no longer your *Sedley*, but I am, moſt truly, your faithful, affectionate

LAVINIA PEMBERTON.

LETTER LXV.

MRS. FOREST,

TO

LADY SEYMOUR.

Willbury.

IT is with the utmoſt reluctance that I write to my dear *Lady Seymour*, on a ſubject which I know, from my own feelings, muſt be infinitely painful to her;—yet ſenſible of her tender affection, and anxious ſolicitude for the happineſs, and fame, of our equally dear *Lady Aubigny*; believing that it is in *her* power more than in

in that of any other perſon to prevail with her to ſave herſelf from wretchedneſs, and her character from cruel aſperſion, by an immediate return to *England*; I could not be juſtified to myſelf, were I to neglect this only trial that remains to ſave the friend ſo dear to the heart of all who know her. *Sir William Foreſt*, is, I thank Heaven, pronounced by his phyſicians to be out of danger;—but is himſelf, as well as *Lady Foreſt*, (whoſe naturally weak ſpirits, you will readily conceive to have ſuffered greatly from her terrors for a life ſo invaluable,) ſo earneſt with us not to leave them, that I find it impoſſible to reſiſt their urgent and united entreaties, or I would myſelf return to *the Spa*, for the purpoſe of withdrawing the dear miſguided one, if poſſible, from a place to which I ſhall for ever regret having been the unfortunate means of introducing her.

You will underſtand, my dear Madam, what I really believe will be the only ſtep which can enſure ſucceſs; your perſonal

influence

influence with *the Counteſs* is my only remaining hope; if *Mrs. Morton* continues ſtill on the recovery, for I learn that ſhe has been regularly mending ſince her return, will you not endeavour to reſcue this ſiſter of your heart from a ſituation which portends the moſt alarming conſequences. In vain, before I left her, did I repreſent to her the imprudence and impropriety of her remaining at the *Spa*, without a ſingle friend of her own ſex; it was to no purpoſe that I urged the expediency of her returning with us to *England*; or that at leaſt, ſhe would put herſelf under the protection of ſome of the families of character and conſequence, who were then at the *Spa*; and into any of which ſhe would have been gladly received.—The ſame ill-ſucceſs attended my remonſtrances with my dear infatuated brother;—*Lady Meadows*, has ſince written to him equally in vain; as have I to our beloved *Beatrice*; but what can *I* expect from all that I can urge, who know that *you*, my dear *Lady Seymour* have employed your pen on

on the ſame ſubject in vain. *Your* immediate preſence can alone produce the deſired conſequence of opening her eyes to the imprudence of her conduct, and of ſnatching her from impending ruin. I will make no apology to you, my dear madam, for the liberty of this epiſtle, and the wiſh it conveys; the motives by which I am influenced, thoſe of the tendereſt affection towards your much valued friend, and the deſire of ſecuring the peace and felicity of our ſeveral families, and of the many who hold her dear, will, I am aſſured, ſecure me your pardon for whatever may appear too preſuming in the freedom of her, who has the honour to ſubſcribe herſelf *Lady Seymour's*,

moſt obedient,

and very affectionate humble Servant,

C. FOREST.

LETTER

LETTER LXVI.

LADY SEYMOUR,

TO

MRS. FOREST.

Spa.

YOUR very kind letter, my dear *Mrs. Foreſt*, which was ſent after me to this place, would have incited me to an immediate compliance with the wiſh it convey d; had I been, as you expected I ſhould be, at *Morton-Hall*, to receive it; but before it reached that place, I had ſet out on a journey, which as well as yourſelf, I believed to be eſſential to the intereſts of my beloved friend; a letter which I received from her, too ſtrongly expreſſive of ſentiments, which evinced, that without the inſtant interpoſition of a friendſhip, that dared to ſave her honour and her peace, at the hazard, even, of loſing her favour, and affection, ſhe would be irrecoverably

verably loſt to herſelf, and ſociety,' inſpired me with a fervent deſire to make the only trial which remained, to free her from the infatuation into which ſhe had ſo unhappily fallen—Alas! my dear *Mrs. Foreſt*, how ſhort-ſighted are the views of us frail mortals? and how do the deſigns of providence mock our idle hopes,' ~~and~~ how chaſtiſe the preſumption of our vain confidence in aught but himſelf, and the wiſdom and juſtice of his righteous diſpenſations!—My dear *Sir Charles*, to whom to communicate my wiſh, was to procure his willing aſſent; offered to accompany me on my expedition; *Mrs. Morton*, with whom *ſelf* is ever a ſecondary conſideration, when the welfare, and happineſs of others is to be promoted, or ſecured, readily conſented to my leaving her for a purpoſe ſo deſirable.

With a heart elate with hope, and priding itſelf in the thought of ſucceſs; expanding with the flattering and *deceitful* proſpect

proſpect of many a bright hour to come, of many a future joy, in the recovery of the friend ſo infinitely dear to me; I entered on a journey from which I expected ſo happy a reſult:—arrived;—we alighted at the *Hotel D'H*—— from whence I ſent a note to her lodgings, intimating our arrival. The meſſenger ſoon returned with the following alarming billet.

" And is it then deſtined to the hapleſs *Beatrice*, to taſte once again of joy, ere ſhe is called from a world, to her, of ſo much miſery and danger?—Has that Heaven which I have ſo greatly offended, in cheriſhing a fatally powerful inclination, which its laws oppoſed, deigned to look with pity on a wretch like me? to hear my prayers; to regard my anguiſh; and ſend, in you, its better angel to receive my expiring ſigh? For, ah! my *Henrietta*, I ſhall ſoon expiate in death, my follies and my crimes; even whilſt I write, I feel my ſtrength decay; my blood creeps ſlowly through my veins; and denotes approaching

proaching fate.—Come then *friend, ſiſter, partner* of my heart; that heart which will ſoon ceaſe to beat, but which, till then will fondly cheriſh a grateful remembrance of your unequalled friendſhip and affection. O come, and as the laſt proof that you can give me of your tenderneſs and love, prepare me for the awful hour which is haſtily advancing.—O come, and join with mine, your fervent prayers, that my penitence and humble ſorrows may be deemed efficient by the God of Mercy; and find acceptance at the throne of grace;—I can no more.——— Haſten my beloved *Henrietta* to give, by your preſence, conſolation to the laſt moments of your expiring

BEATRICE".

O, my dear *Mrs. Foreſt!* to *you* need I attempt to deſcribe what were my feelings, on the peruſal of this *heart-wounding* epiſtle? I flew inſtantly to her apartments, where I was informed, by her woman, that

that ſhe had been ~~ſeized~~ seized with a fever ſome days before; and, although its violence had greatly abated, her phyſicians ſeemed to fear every thing, from her ſettled melancholy, and extreme weakneſs.—Ever will that moment of piercing grief, of agonizing ſorrow, be preſent in my memory, which preſented, to my eyes, my once blooming, and ſprightly *Beatrice*, pale, and languiſhing; her fine form waſted and emaciated; thoſe eyes, erſt ſo brilliant, and ſparkling with health, and vivacity, now ſunk with ſickneſs, and dimmed with weeping.—Her whole figure pathetically expreſſive of melancholy, and deſpair.

As I ſoftly entered her apartment, ſhe haſtily drew back her curtain;—is it not my *Henrietta?* ſhe aſked,—then ſeeing me, ſhe eagerly exclaimed, it is!—it is *indeed* my *Henrietta!*—with an effort, which ſeemed to call forth all her ſtrength, ſhe ſuddenly raiſed herſelf in her bed;—I received her in my arms; ſhe gazed on me, for a minute, with a wildneſs of mixed

tranſport

tranſport and anguiſh; and then, unable to ſpeak, and claſping her arms around my neck, ſhe hid her face in my boſom, and burſt into tears;—I ſuffered her to indulge, for ſome ~~little while~~ moments, without interruption, in this neceſſary relief to a heart which ſeemed almoſt burſting with conflicting agony; my own, to which the ſame relief was for ſome minutes denied, in a ſtate to which deſcription is inadequate;—ſhe grew calm, at length; raiſing her eyes to mine, O my *Henrietta!* ſaid ſhe, in a faint voice, how good! how condeſcendingly good! is this, to a wretch, whom even friendſhip like your's, could not preſerve from miſery;—muſt I ſay from guilt; yes! ſince as *guilty*, muſt be held, even the involuntary infidelity of the *heart*, in her whoſe vows, were, in the ſight of heaven, given to another.—Ah! added ſhe, again weeping, I ſhall deſtroy you my friend; for the tears, which at firſt refuſed their aid, now flowed in deſpight of my efforts to reſtrain them; I ſee how ſenſibly I affect you; but, O, my beſt *Henrietta!* purſued

ſued ſhe, how will your gentle, your affectionate heart ſuſtain the awful ſcene which yet remains;—and I, cruel that I am! I rejoice that your tenderneſs for me has brought you to be a witneſs of what will pierce your too feeling, your affectionate heart—with anguiſh which I ſhould have prayed might have been ſpared you.

Talk not thus gloomily, thus affectingly, my deareſt *Beatrice*, interrupted I; (for, till this moment, I had vainly attempted to ſpeak; the words hung quivering on my lips, nor could obtain the power of ſound) alarm not yourſelf with apprehenſions which I truſt are groundleſs; you will recover my ſweet friend; I ſhall ſee you every way reſtored to me; I already feel the happy *preſentiment* of many years of felicity in ſtore for us both. Be comforted then, let me entreat that you will; believe me, my dear love, if you do not thus voluntarily reſign yourſelf to deſpair, you will live, and all will be well.—But, continued I, you muſt now endeavour to compoſe

compoſe yourſelf; I will ſtay by your bed-ſide, on this only condition, that you will endeavour to take a little reſt; which your late ſurprize, and emotions, render very neceſſary; ſhe affectionately embraced me, and, without again ſpeaking, for her ſtrength was greatly exhauſted from her late exertions; ſhe again reclined herſelf on her pillow; after ſeveral times opening the curtain, and viewing me ſeated by her, with a look of ſatisfaction, ſhe at length dropped into a ſlumber, which laſted for more than an hour; and from which ſhe awoke, as her women and nurſe obſerved, more apparently refreſhed and compoſed, than they had ſeen her ſince her illneſs.—I have talked with her phyſicians, who ſay they hope much from the encreaſed compoſure of her mind; ſince it is there the malady is chiefly ſeated; and from thence that her indiſpoſition wholly originated; but indeed, my dear *Mrs. Foreſt*, I cannot flatter, either myſelf or you, with any very ſanguine expectations; perhaps my fears, augmented by

by my tenderneſs for the ſweet ſufferer, may be unneceſſarily great; but methinks that calm, that apparent compoſure, from which alone they ſeem to draw their hopes of her recovery, is rather the effect of decayed ſtrength, and a reſigned deſpair, (if the expreſſion may be allowed me) than the prognoſtic of amending health. May I be miſtaken! you will, I am ſure, join my prayers for the preſervation of a life, which if ſpared, may, I flatter myſelf, be yet exemplary, and inſtructive;—and who can tell, my dear *Mrs. Foreſt*, but the wiſdom and goodneſs of the Almighty, whoſe gracious diſpenſations are ever calculated to promote the eternal happineſs of his creatures, may have thus reduced our beloved friend, to the very verge of diſſolution, for the purpoſe of reſcuing her from the paths of error; by ſhewing her the inſufficiency of every ſublunary hope to give comfort in the hour of apprehenſion; and that a life ſpent in the practice of truth, and virtue, can alone give peace at the laſt; and ſmooth the bed of pain.—You will doubtleſs

doubtleſs expect to hear ſomething of your brother; I have ſeen him, not to reproach, but to pity and conſole him.—I will not deceive you, my dear madam, he is ſcarcely leſs than the *Counteſs*, the object of commiſeration, and compaſſionate attention; ſo greatly is he ſhocked at her ſituation, and diſtracted with the idea of her danger;—the keenneſs of ſelf-upbraiding, and repentant remorſe, preys on his agonizing heart, with all the force which was to be expected from a mind of naturally the beſt diſpoſitions, but bleeding from a ſenſibility, an impetuoſity of temper, which, when no longer under the guidance of reaſon, is too frequently productive of conſequences the moſt fatal. Be aſſured, my dear *Mrs. Foreſt*, that the utmoſt attention of *Sir Charles*, will be employed to alleviate the anguiſh for which he moſt ſenſibly feels; he ſcarcely ever leaves him, and *Sir Edward* ſeems to receive conſolation from his ſociety; we ſhall not miſs a day to acquaint you with the ſtate of the dear invalid; on which that of your

brother, ſo unfortunately, alas! depends. That they may both be mercifully, and wholly reſtored to us, will be, I know, the equally fervent, and hourly prayers of my dear *Mrs. Foreſt*, and her afflicted, but affectionate

HENRIETTA SEYMOUR.

LETTER LXVII.

SIR CHARLES SEYMOUR,

TO

MR. FOREST.

Spa.

I Know not, my dear Sir, in what manner to begin a letter, which will convey to you intelligence ſo unwelcome, ſo much to be lamented, as the very dangerous

gerous ſtate of the *Counteſs of Aubigny*. I greatly fear that the worſt is not only to be apprehended, but expected;—we do indeed hourly expect the fatal ſtroke, which will deprive the world of an accompliſhed, and moſt amiable woman; (for ſuch, notwithſtanding the unhappy fatality to which ſhe will too ſoon fall the regretted ſacrifice, ſhe aſſuredly is) and fill with ſorrow the hearts of all who know her;—for ever, I fear deſtroy the happineſs of thoſe with whom the moſt tender friendſhip, and entire affection, more particularly, and cloſely united her. My dear *Henrietta*'s grief, ſo wholly overpowers her every faculty, that excluſive of her aſſiduous attendance on her unfortunate friend, whom ſhe no longer leaves for a moment; ſhe is utterly unable to write again to *Mrs. Foreſt*, on this melancholy occaſion; ſhe therefore begs by me, her affectionate regards to *her*, whoſe ſorrows are too unhappily, ſo cloſely connected with her own.—As the dreaded event, which we can no

longer conſider but as inevitable, will too probably have happened by the time this reaches you; it is *Lady Seymour's* earneſt entreaty that *Mrs. Foreſt* may be ſpared a journey which could anſwer no other purpoſe than that of adding to the grief which muſt, in all events, be but too poignant; as to *Sir Edward*, no words can paint the agonies he ſuffers.—But let *Mrs. Foreſt*, and yourſelf, my dear Sir, be aſſured, that every ſoothing attention, every care ſhall be employed to alleviate his ſorrows, and to ſave him from deſpair;—from himſelf.

I have written, by expreſs, to *Lord Aubigny*, and to *Lady Campbell*, on the unhappy ſubject which now occupies our every thought;—but greatly fear the much-dreaded moment will be paſt before they can have received my letters.—My next to you, my dear *Mr. Foreſt*, may be expected to be fraught with tidings of either unlooked for hope, or the confirmation of an event, which yet I ſhudder to think

think of.—But as there is much to fear, and little, *very* little to hope,—it will be adviſeable that the mind of *Mrs. Foreſt*, ſhould be prepared to receive intelligence which no precaution can render otherwiſe than dreadful, and moſt unhappy. I am, my dear Sir,

your deeply affected friend,

and humble Servant,

C. SEYMOUR.

LETTER LXVIII.

THE SAME

TO

THE SAME.

Spa.

MY DEAR SIR,

MY laſt letter will have but too well prepared you to expect the fatal news with which this is charged. It is almoſt needleſs to add that the once lovely *Aubigny* is, alas! no more.—I have beheld the ſoul-harrowing view of youth and beauty, cut down like the tranſient flower of a day, and its glories laid forever in the duſt;—*did I ſay forever?* ah! no! my dear Sir; let us not talk thus, as thoſe "*who have no hope*" beyond the gloomy regions of the grave, the eye of *faith* penetrates through the cloud, which is utter darkneſs to the infidel and the ſceptic; and beholds the rays of light which guide the penitent and the contrite, to the ſeats of bliſs eternal. But for the conſolation which

which *Religion* affords, how, my dear *Mr. Foreſt*, would frail mortality be enabled to bear up againſt the numerous calamities, and afflicting diſpenſations of this life? it was in the promiſes which this all-ſupporting friend of thoſe who ſeek her, holds out to the ſorrowing heart of contrition, that the dear departed one found conſolation at the laſt; and was enabled to ſpeak peace to thoſe, whoſe wrung hearts diſabled them from giving that conſolatory aid to her, which ſhe might have been ſuppoſed moſt to require; it is to a youth ſpent in the diſcharge of its duties, that my beloved *Henrietta* is indebted for the ſupport which prevents her from ſinking under the load of anguiſh, which the ſcenes ſhe has ſo lately witneſſed, muſt have otherwiſe rendered a burthen of miſery too great, for a heart affectionate, and attached as hers, to have borne;—but what cannot all-lovely, all-ſmiling religion, aſſiſted by the Divine Grace, enable us to ſupport; when it bids us remember that we are here but the paſſengers of an hour; where our ſhort part

well ſuſtained, we ſhall enter on a land where the trials of virtue, its temptations, and its ſufferings, ſhall be at an end; where friends, ſeparated for a moment, ſhall meet, to part no more, in an eternity of virtue, and the fulneſs of bliſs.

Such, my dear *Mr. Foreſt*, muſt be our conſolation, and aſſured hope; for vain is all which can be offered on a leſs permanent foundation. I muſt attend my poor *Henrietta*, for ſome moments; and will then endeavour to ſtate the particulars of this regretted, and moſt melancholy event.

Previous to the diſpatching of my former letter, I had deſired of the dear unfortunate's phyſicians, to be truly, and unequivocally informed of their ſentiments concerning her;—they candidly acknowledged, that the hope which remained was ſo very faint, it could be ſcarcely ſo called! that they had every reaſon to expect ſhe could not live many days; it was more than poſſible, ſhe might expire even before

ſore the next; and that in fact, nothing remained to be done, but the keeping her mind and ſpirits, as compoſed as poſſible. I ſent immediately for *Lady Seymour*, that ſhe might be made acquainted, in the beſt manner we could deviſe, with ~~the~~ an opinion, which, however to have been expected, could not but be afflicting, in the extreme, to her, who had loved her with a *more* than *ſiſterly* affection; and to prepare her mind for the dreadful moment, which would, too probably, ſo very ſoon arrive. She had but juſt entered the room, when the *Counteſs's* woman, pale as aſhes, and breathleſs with terror, followed, and wildly catching the arm of my terrified *Henrietta*, and drawing her towards the apartment of her miſtreſs; after a moment, exclaimed, *My Lady,—Sir Edward Meadows!*——ſhe could no more, nor could *Lady Seymour* utter a word; I aſſiſted her with my arm, and we entered the room together. O *Mr. Foreſt!* what a ſcene preſented itſelf! On his knee, by the bedſide, we beheld *Sir Edward*; with a countenance of hor-

ror, of agony unutterable; the hand of the *Counteſs* cloſely graſped in his; his looks fixed, with frightful wildneſs, on the cloſed eyes, and death-like complexion of the hapleſs *Beatrice*; calling alternately in the voice of diſtraction, and deſpair, for help and aſſiſtance, and exclaiming; *'Tis falſe! by Heaven, ſhe ſhall not die!*—then in a ſofter tone, yet ſtill wildly, adding, O ſave her, ſave but her precious life, and my whole fortune, the wealth of kingdoms ſhall be yours.—As *Lady Seymour* approached her bed; the dear angel, half opening her eyes, gave ſigns of returning life; I applied myſelf to your unhappy brother;—*Sir Edward*, ſaid I, in a ſoothing voice, why do you thus? why ſo inconſiderately diſturb that ſerenity of mind, ſo neceſſary to *Lady Aubigny's* recovery; and which can alone reſtore her to our hopes; come, added I, taking his arm; let me entreat that you will go with me; and leave my *Henrietta* to aſſiſt her friend in regaining the compoſure of which your unexpected

unexpected and agitated appearance could not fail to deprive her.—If you regard *Lady Aubigny's* life, purſued I, in a firmer tone, you will not delay a moment to yield to my perſuaſions.—'Till this inſtant he had continued immoveable, apparently regardleſs of all around him. He now, after eagerly preſſing the hand he yet held to his lips; ſtarted from his knees, and viewing me with an air half frantic; *if* I regard her *life!* uttered he with impatience, God of Heaven! *if* I regard the life of the adored of my ſoul! of my angelic *Beatrice!* Lead me *Seymour*, ſaid he, ſomewhat more calmly; lead me whither you will; to *death*; to *torments*; would I follow thee with extacy, to add one precious moment to the exiſtence of that angel-form. I led him to the drawing room; and there gathered from him, that coming (his daily cuſtom it ſeems) to wait in the dreſſing-room; there to enquire of paſſing attendants, the ſituation of the *Counteſs*; he, in paſſing by the door of the room in which I was myſelf enquiring in-

formation of her phyſicians; he unfortunately overheard my entreaties to them, to be made acquainted with their candid and real opinion; but too much, alas! intereſted himſelf in the enquiry; he waited the anſwer which declared her fate.—Seized with inſtant diſtraction, and deſpair; he ruſhed to the apartment of *Lady Aubigny*; who at the ſight of him, ſo unexpectedly, and with looks ſo expreſſive of the agony, and diſtraction of his ſoul; uttered a loud ſcreem, and fell lifeleſs on her pillow; from which the nurſe had juſt raiſed her, for the purpoſe of taking a cordial draught) it was in conſequence of this affecting, and alarming ſcene, that her woman, ſcarcely knowing what ſhe did, ran for aſſiſtance to *Lady Seymour*. I obtained of *Sir Edward*, not without much difficulty, a promiſe that he would not, at preſent again attempt to ſee the *Counteſs*, to whom I repreſented a ſecond ſurprize, might prove inſtantly fatal: It was not however then poſſible to prevail with him to quit the hôuſe; propriety was ſoothingly intimated,

was

was warmly urged in vain.—It was now about two in the afternoon; ſhe recovered from her fainting, ſoon after we left her; affectionately embracing *Lady Seymour*, Alas! my dear friend, ſaid ſhe, I had hoped ere this, my harraſſed ſpirit would have taken its flight; I find, however, its faculties were but ſuſpended; but my *Henrietta*, added ſhe, with much calmneſs, it will not be long; – I feel that I muſt ſoon leave you.—O! my beſt friend, will you yet bear a very little longer, with the weakneſs and infirmity, which has already coſt you ſo much pain;—I dare not, purſued ſhe, in a yet fainter voice, wiſh to ſee again the unhappy object who ſo lately preſented himſelf to my eyes, in a ſituation which has nearly deſtroyed the compoſure I have ſo laboured to obtain, and which the merciful goodneſs of God, had in ſo great a degree accorded to my contrite prayers.—O, be it not imputed to me as a crime, (and ſhe raiſed her eyes to Heaven) that I wiſh to convey to him a parting

parting bleſſing, a laſt adieu, nor let my *Henrietta* ſcorn to be the meſſenger to ſpeak peace to his tortured heart. Tell him, my friend, that my prayers are offered for him at the throne of grace; tell him, too, that it is my laſt, my moſt earneſt requeſt to him, that he will carefully preſerve a life ſo invaluable to his family, and his friends;—and may he one day ſelect ſome happy, virtuous object of his choice, with whom he may glide in harmony, down the ſoft-flowing ſtream of life; and bleſs the beſt, and moſt tender of mothers in his felicity;—teach him, my dear *Henrietta*, to conſider me as one permitted, (and ſo I will dare to hope) to atone by an early death the errors of my youth; and received, through his infinite mercies, to the forgiveneſs of my *God*.

Some time after this, ſhe requeſted to ſee me.—My dear *Sir Charles*, ſaid ſhe, (putting out her hand, as I came near her bedſide; forgive me the pain which I know I muſt give to your feeling heart.

Alas!

Alas! how by one fatal error, am I doomed to ſpread deſolation and ſorrow all around me, added ſhe, with a ſigh, and looking on *Lady Seymour*, who ſat almoſt drowned in tears at her feet. Then, again addreſſing herſelf to me, you have written to *Lord Aubigny*, ſaid ſhe, in a tremulous voice, a faint bluſh riſing on her palid cheek as ſhe ſpoke, I could have wiſhed to have ſeen him; to have received his pardon ere I died;—it will not be;—entreat it then for me; tell him that I died acknowledging, and lamenting the injuſtice which I have done him.—She hid her face in the bed-cloaths for ſome minutes; then, but without again looking at me, gently preſſing my hand; ſhe continued, Oh, be a friend to him, who will greatly need the ſoothing attentions, the compaſſionate friendſhip, of a heart ſo formed to give comfort in the hour of affliction. Give me your hand, my dear *Henrietta*, purſued ſhe; ſhe did ſo;—when putting it into mine, and preſſing them both between hers;

hers; ſhe affectingly added—may the God of Heaven preſerve, to a late old age, the lives of theſe my friends.—O, may your felicity be equal to your worth; and may the remembrance of her, whoſe ſorrows will be then at reſt, embitter not your virtuous days.—In this trying moment the ſoul of my *Henrietta*, and my own, were too equally overwhelmed with the moſt piercing grief, to permit to either the power of ſpeech. I could only preſs her dying hand, to my lips, whilſt *Lady Seymour*, hung over her languid form, in ſilent agony. She ſaw the conflict;—begged our forgiveneſs for the pain ſhe had occaſioned us; and ſaid ſhe would now endeavour to take a little reſt.

I returned to *Sir Edward*, but dared not to acquaint him, with my ſentiments that ſhe could not ſurvive the night; leſt I ſhould renew his diſtraction, and he ſhould forget the promiſe I had extorted from him; with much difficulty I prevailed with him

him to retire between twelve and one:—from ten till which time, ſhe had continued quite compoſed, and generally dozing;—on this aſſurance, he at laſt reluctantly retired; I was, however, myſelf ſo apprehenſive of what might be the event of the night, that I reſolved not to go to bed. Alas! the event but too fatally juſtified my fears;—about three o'clock in the morning, *Lady Seymour's* woman rapped at my door; ſhe was [illegible] that *Lady Aubrey* was already expiring, and thought my preſence would be neceſſary to ſupport the ſpirits of my almoſt diſtracted *Henrietta*; I found her indeed in a ſituation which convinced me that ſhe had not many minutes to live. I die, my deareſt friend, ſaid ſhe, to my *Henrietta* (who half ſupported her in her arms) but, O, afflict not yourſelf thus; let this conſoling thought leſſen your grief; that I die, conſcious of, and humbly acknowledging my errors; yet in full confidence of the mercies of my *God*, and the all-ſufficient

ficient merits of a gracious *Redeemer*.—Say for me, my beſt friend, all that duty, gratitude, and affection can dictate to my dear *Mr.* and *Mrs. Weſtbury*, and their *Lucy*; alas! what tears ſhall I not coſt them? O may the latter be taught, from my fate, to eſteem every thing as light, when placed in competition with a conſcience void of blame; and tremble, for the ſake of wealth, and tranſitory honours, [illegible] *falſe vows*, in the ſacred preſence of that Being, whoſe juſtice will not ſuffer a perjury ſo impious, to paſs unpuniſhed. After a pauſe of ſome moments ſhe proceeded;—tell my dear *Charlotte* that I have never ceaſed to love her; thank *Lady Campbell* for her friendſhip to her unworthy niece; and aſſure the amiable *Lavinia* of my wiſhes for her felicity.—Her breath grew now ſo ſhort, that it was with extreme difficulty, and after a ſecond pauſe, that ſhe added (feebly preſſing her hand,) O my *Henrietta*! forget not,—a tear intervened—O ſave—ſupport—him.

But

But juſt audible was the whiſpered ſupplication which followed—Pardon, O father! the weakeſt of all thy creatures, and receive me to thy mercy.—Her ſpirits wholly exhauſted, ſhe ſunk gently on her pillow; *Lady Seymour's* arm ſtill gently ſuſtaining her drooping head.—She lay a few ſeconds quiet and ſilent; as if no longer ſuſceptible of pain, or reflection;—but then a deep ſigh, burſt from her boſom. She fixed her eyes, as well as ſ[illegible], on my *Henriett*[illegible] laſt deſired object.—O pray for—*me*, ſhe *would* have added; but it was paſt; the voice of our beloved friend was heard no more.—The ſiſter of her ſoul received her juſt breathleſs form; and a ſecond, but a ſofter ſigh, concluded her ſhort, and ſuffering ſcene; and winged her gentle ſpirit to the regions of peace, and immortality.

And here, my dear *Mr. Foreſt*, a reſpite will be equally neceſſary to us both.—I cannot as yet proceed on my mournful taſk.

My

My *Henrietta*, whoſe fortitude had ſupported her through a taſk of ſuch agonizing woe, now ſunk under a trial too ſevere; ſhe fainted on the lifeleſs body of her beloved friend; and it was ſo long ere ſhe recovered, that my fears became exceſſive; when *Doctor H——*, who had been ſent for, on the dear departed angel's growing viſibly worſe, fortunately arrived; by his kind aſſiſtance ſhe was ſoon reſtored [illegible] of ſenſibility; ſhe remains however in a ſituation [illegible] which you who know her tenderneſs of heart, and the [illegible] affected love ſhe bore to her loſt friend, will readily imagine, as well as my ſevere apprehenſions for the conſequence of her future health and ſpirits;—it is now but ſeven of this fatal morning; *Doctor H——* has engaged to be the meſſenger of the dreadful news to *Sir Edward*; being in his confidence, and high in his eſteem; he has promiſed me not to leave him till he ſhall find him in ſome degree compoſed; and that he will be, as far as his profeſſional engagements will permit, his conſtant companion.

companion. It is not, you will allow, poſſible, that he ſhould be in better hands;—he will I am aſſured give the beſt poſſible turn to all the circumſtances of this moſt lamented event.—We ſhall, you may be certain, haſten to leave a ſpot to which we ſhall never return; as well as to withdraw your unhappy *brother* from this ſcene of horror.—I write by the ſame expreſs to *Lord Aubigny*, *Lady Campbell*, and to *Mr. Pemberton*, for whom my heart bleeds on this moſt diſtreſſing occaſion; ſo much will he, I well know, feel for the ſorrows of his friend. Before I cloſe this, I ſhall be careful to learn from *Doctor H*—— the ſtate of poor *Sir Edward's* mind.—Alas! it cannot but be that of excruciating anguiſh; may it not be of utter deſpair.

LETTER

LETTER LXIX.

DR. H———,

TO

MR. FOREST.

Spa.

ALAS, my dear *Sir*, our precautions, our tender anxiety for your dear unhappy *brother*, were all in vain;—vain did I engage to perform the melancholy taſk; how dreadful this, I have now undertaken,—the informing you of an event which our utmoſt prudence had not been able to guard againſt. It is poſſible that you may already feel a *preſentiment* of what I know not how to relate; yet it muſt be told.

The wretched *Sir Edward*, diſtracted with his fears for *Lady Aubigny's* life, had engaged a ſervant lad of the family, to give

give him immediate notice of every change which ſhould happen to her; of which the former could eaſily inform himſelf from the other ſervants; who anxiouſly enquired of every one who came from her appartment, the ſituation of their beloved miſtreſs:—moſt unfortunately he learnt the ſad intelligence of her death; before I was myſelf acquainted with it; and had already conveyed it to *Sir Edward*; who alas! dreadfully prepared for the worſt tidings he could receive; and fatally reſolved not to ſurvive the moſt lovely and lamented of women; almoſt inſtantly put a piſtol, which, with another, lay ready charged on the table to his temple, and in a moment deprived himſelf of a life which he had no longer fortitude to ſuſtain. On his table was found a billet addreſſed to *Mr. Pemberton.*

It is not, *my dear Sir*, in the power of language to expreſs how greatly I regret the untimely fate of this much eſteemed friend;—

friend;—my heart too bleeds for *Mrs. Foreſt*, whoſe tender affection for the kindeſt of *brothers*, I have often witneſſed with a delight, now to be exchanged for the bitterneſs of pain; for the beſt and moſt affectionate of parents; for indeed all his family and connexions; *Sir Charles Seymour*, himſelf overwhelmed with grief and conſternation, bears the additional weight of ſeeing his beloved wife ſinking under this accumulation of horror and diſtreſs. Every neceſſary preparation will be made for the immediately conveying to England the dear remains of theſe ever to be lamented friends; not doubting but ſuch will be the deſire of their families.

It will be abſolutely neceſſary that *Lady Seymour*, ſhould be as ſoon as poſſible, removed from theſe ſcenes of heart-rending woe; in any event I greatly fear, that ſhe will never entirely recover the ſevere ſhock her late trials have given to her health and ſpirits; the melancholy remembrance

membrance of them will never be effaced from my boſom, nor ſhall I ever ceaſe to ſympathize with the unhappy connexions of each dear departed.—For *you*, my dear *Mr. Foreſt*, I feel more than words can declare; condemned to the exquiſitely painful taſk of filling with grief unutterable, the breaſts of all whom you moſt love and revere. May that heaven whoſe myſterious providence governs the events of the univerſe, and diſpoſes of all to the ultimate advantage of his frail and ſhort-ſighted creatures, calm the agonies of their diſtracted hearts, and ſpeak to them that peace, in the hour of affliction, *which the world cannot give.* Such, my dear Sir, are the fervent prayers of your very affectionate, and ſympathizing friend.

W. H.

THE BILLET

OF

SIR EDWARD MEADOWS,

TO

MR. PEMBERTON.

NO! we ſhall meet no more! the *preſentiment* was but too truly prophetic; we muſt never meet again; ſhe is gone; the beauteous, the adored Aubigny! lies in the cold arms of death.——And dare I breathe to write it? Forgive, O beloved of my ſoul! forgive the momentary delay.—Thou ſhalt be avenged; one moment only and I follow thee—where we will part no more.—Comfort my mother,—*Pemberton!*—conſole my ſiſters;—let them ſuſtain her declining age, nor ſuffer her to feel the loſs of her wretched, her unworthy ſon.—I would aſk your prayers—alas! they will be too late.—

Yet

Yet forgive, O, my *God*, a wretch whoſe weakneſs can ſuſtain no longer the loathed load of life; O take back, with pity and forgiveneſs, the breath thou gav'ſt;—and receive to thy mercy, my departing ſoul.—O, *Pemberton*, —yet a moment—and the world cloſes forever on thy

MEADOWS.

LETTER LXVII.

COLONEL EGREMONT,

TO

MR. SIDNEY.

I Have juſt received a letter from poor *Aubigny* on the ſubject of my yeſterday's to you. He ſeems extremely ſhocked at the dreadful event;—extols the graces, the many virtues of his loſt angel, and execrates the name of *Antonia*, whoſe arts with-held him from following

his ill-fated *Beatrice* to the *Spa*. As my duty here will not permit me to leave—will you, *Sidney*, have the charity to viſit the poor fellow, and offer him all the conſolation that the unhappy circumſtance will admit.—I am ſure that you join my ſentiments of pity and great regret, for the ſake of the tranſcendently lovely, but unfortunate *Counteſs*. Ah, my dear *Sidney!* how infinitely indebted am I to the virtues and affection of your charming ſiſter, for having reſcued me thus timely from the ſnares of vicious diſſipation, and faſhionable folly. I *would* have ſaved our poor friend, had he permitted me;—he will now, I fear, pay dear for his cure;—it is ſurely impoſſible that he ſhould again relapſe into the extremes of folly.

I am, my dear Sidney's affectionate and grateful brother,

GEORGE EGREMONT.

LETTER

LETTER LXVIII.

MISS. PEMBERTON.

TO

MISS RIVERS.

Oak-Hill.

[*After an interval of ſome months.*]

MY dear father is, at length, my friend, ſufficiently recovered to follow the advice of his *Phyſicians*, in making the tour of *France* and *Italy*; my ever kind *Lady Campbell* will accompany us, as will likewiſe *Mr. D'Albiac*, at leaſt as far as *Paris*; I have yielded equally to the importunities of the latter, and the fervent, though ſilent, wiſhes of my dear *Parents* (for what but *parent* ſhould I ſtile my dear *benefactreſs?*) and they have my promiſe that I will give him my hand on our return to *England*.—The viſible ſatisfaction which

this declaration has given to my poor *father*, joined to the eſteem which I cannot but acknowledge for the virtues of *Mr. D'Albiac*, make me feel more eaſy under an engagement of ſuch moment to my future peace, than I once thought I could have done.—Yet they are none of them contented with a delay which they call unreaſonable; but how, my dear *Maria*, after the dreadful ſcenes which have ſo lately paſſed; whilſt my heart is yet bleeding for the fate of my once dear *Lady Aubigny*; and that of him, for whom it acknowledged (and will for ever cheriſh the remembrance) ſentiments of friendly, and ſiſterly affection; how, under theſe circumſtances, can I ſo ſoon think of turning my thoughts from images thus affecting, and reſigning my mind to ideas of chearfulneſs, and felicity?

You will be in readineſs, my beſt friend, by the end of this month;—ere which period, you will be at liberty; you have given

given me your promiſe you know to accompany us on our *tour*; ah, my dear *Maria!* will you *afterwards* have the cruelty to deſert me; when I ſhall more than ever need the ſupporting preſence of my friend;—'till ~~ſhe~~ one who ſhall have a ſtronger claim to your affection than myſelf, ſhall take you from me, you muſt not think of leaving me; but of this, more hereafter.

Mr. and *Mrs. Foreſt* have taken up their abode with *Lady Meadows*, whom they will never leave during her life; her *Ladyſhip* and *Miſs Meadows* have left the *Cottage*, and the former has purchaſed a ſeat near *Sir William Foreſt's*; being unable to bear a ſcene which ſo perpetually reminds her of her paſt happineſs; they are indeed almoſt always at *Wilbury*, *Sir William* and *Lady Foreſt* being attached to them with the utmoſt warmth of family affection.—*Lady Meadows* does not receive any other company; and though ſhe bears her fate with a pious reſignation, equally

edifying

edifying and affecting, ſhe has never been ſeen to ſmile ſince the fatal news of her *ſon's* death reached her ear;—yet they have concealed, both from *her*, and his ſiſters, the dreadful *manner* of that *death*, which too probably would have proved an aggravation of affliction, too much for a *mother* to have borne without being utterly cruſhed by its weight. By the friendly and generouſly humane exertions of *doctor H*——, to ſuppreſs the report, which would have otherwiſe too quickly ſpread, to have made this concealment practicable, the unhappy circumſtance is very little known; and he is generally believed to have expired of a ſudden, and violent fever; which carried him off in a few hours.—*Mrs. Foreſt* and *Miſs Meadows* (as well as the other part of her family) exert their utmoſt fortitude to ſupport the ſpirits of their unhappy *mother*; and their generous ſtruggles to repreſs their feelings, in pity to the ſtill more poignant anguiſh of an afflicted parent, have the good effect of enabling them to loſe, in ſome degree,

gree, the ſenſe of their own ſorrow, in their unremitted endeavours to leſſen and alleviate her's—*Lady Seymour* has paid us a viſit of a few days within this fortnight; ſhe is greatly altered, in conſequence of her long indiſpoſition, which originated in her grief for the fate of the ever to be regretted *Lady Aubigny*, and that of the equally unfortunate *Sir Edward*.—But her piety, her reſignation, and confidence in the all-wiſe diſpenſations of a gracious providence, ſupport her under afflictions to which the delicacy of her frame, and the poignancy of her feelings, would be otherwiſe inadequate—whilſt the extreme anxiety and apprehenſive tenderneſs of her beloved *Sir Charles*, who accompanied her, and who indeed never leaves her,—make her evidently exert her every effort for the reſtoration of her health and ſpirits.—I was pleaſed to find that they were returning to *Morton-Hall*, to be preſent at the marriage of *Mrs. Willis* (with *Mr. Herbert*) who after two years of extreme infelicity, which ſhe was obliged to paſs in the ſociety of a man

man every way unworthy of her, and to whom ſhe was ſacrificed, at the early age of ſeventeen, by the avarice of a tyrannic *father*, will be now united to the man whom her heart and reaſon, alike approve, and on whoſe virtues we need not paſs an higher *eulogium* than this, that he is the acknowledged and eſteemed friend of *Sir Charles Seymour*. The agreeable vivacity of this lovely woman; the pleaſure ſhe cannot but receive from the entire recovery of the eſtimable *Mrs. Morton*; and the chearful ſcenes, in which on this occaſion ſhe muſt neceſſarily engage, will, I ſincerely hope, diſſipate *Lady Seymour's* thoughts, and keep them from dwelling too intently on the melancholy ſcenes, which ſhe has unhappily witneſſed; though nothing can be expected to ever totally obliterate their painful remembrance. The fate indeed of theſe dear unfortunates muſt be ever an alloy to the *happieſt* moments of all who were once bleſt in their confidence and friendſhip.

Lord

Lord Aubigny, who appeared at the firſt to be, and I believe really was for a *ſhort* time, ſincerely affected, by the death of his beauteous *Beatrice*; has already returned to the world of faſhion, as gay, as volatile, as much the ſlave of diſſipation, and of folly, as ever.—It was reported that he had been prevailed with, in a ſtate of intoxication, to ſign a contract of marriage with *La Signora*—but were this the caſe, it cannot be doubted that the *Lady* would have purſued her advantage, without delay. I had heard before the arrival of your letter, of the marriage of *Lady Ann Maynell*. Conſidering her former ſuppoſed attachment to the forever to be regretted *Meadows*, ſhe paid not ſurely, too long, her tribute of grief to his memory; in leſs than a *month* after the fatal cataſtrophe, which has doomed the many who loved and eſteemed him, to a never-ceaſing regret, ſhe gave her hand to the man, whom ſhe had not known for a much longer period;—there are, who eſteem ſuch inſenſibility of temper to be a felicity, worthy the wiſh of the wiſe; for *me*, whatever

ever ſorrows I may be fated to experience, I aſk not for, nor could receive as a bleſſing, apathy of feeling; nor can diveſt it in my ideas, from a ſomething extremely unamiable; inſenſible to all the better ſocialities of life; loſt to the delights of refined and virtuous friendſhip; — and incapable of true affection. How could ſuch a mind have been ever ſuppoſed to be ſuſceptible of *love*—I cannot belive it.

Adieu my deareſt *Maria*; the ſubject of this letter ſo overpowers my weak ſpirits, by the affecting images thus forcibly preſſed afreſh on my remembrance, that my heart demands its wanted relief of tears.—Long, *very* long will they continue to pay their daily tribute to the misfortunes of *Edward* and *Beatrice*,—Ever, and *greatly* dear, will be their memories, to the heart of your faithful

LAVINIA PEMBERTON.

FINIS.